

Peace talks start on Polish strike

GDANSK, Poland (R) — Solidarity strikers and management representatives began talks at the Lenin shipyard Saturday after mediation by the Roman Catholic bishop of Gdansk, a spokesman for the outlawed free trade union said. The talks appeared a breakthrough on the sixth day of the stoppage after repeated refusals by the management to meet the Solidarity strike committee. The meeting followed an appeal for peace talks by Lech Walesa and the strike committee. Their support appeared to be eroding as strikers slipped away through a massive police cordon around the yard. Solidarity spokesman Piotr Konopka told reporters that management had agreed to discuss pay claims, security guarantees for the strikers and reinstatement of dismissed workers. But it refused to discuss other demands for recognition of Solidarity and freeing of prisoners alleged to be held by the authorities on political grounds. Konopka, a close aide of Walesa who is with the strikers, said the talks meant that "the (Solidarity) strike committee has been recognised as a representation of the workers."

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2 SLA men killed

BEIRUT (AP) — Two Israeli-backed militiamen were killed Saturday in South Lebanon when a roadside bomb exploded, knocking out their armoured personnel carrier, U.N. sources in the area said. They said gunners of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia responded by shelling three nearby villages, but a casualty report was not immediately available.

PLO envoy visits Cairo

CAIRO (R) — A Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official arrived in Cairo Saturday to brief officials on the PLO's improved ties with Syria, Palestinian sources said. The envoy, Hani Al Hassan, will also discuss other Middle East developments with Egyptian officials, the sources said.

Pilgrims require meningitis protection

RIYADH (AP) — Pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia this year will require vaccinations against meningitis, medical authorities announced Saturday. Dr. Abdullah Al Anizi, director-general of the Ministry of Health's Contagious and Parasitic Disease Department, said pilgrims should be vaccinated three weeks in advance.

Turks detain 17 Iranian guards

ANKARA (R) — Turkish troops detained 17 Iranian Revolutionary Guards who attempted to infiltrate into northern Iraq from Turkey, official sources said Saturday. The armed Iranians were picked up early Friday in a mountainous area near the town of Sennidli in Hakkari province, which borders both Iran and Iraq, the sources said. Under questioning by military authorities, the guards said they were trying to cross into northern Iraq to link up with Kurdish guerrillas fighting the Baghdad government, the sources said.

Glaspie briefs Lebanese leaders

BEIRUT (AP) — U.S. State Department emissary April Glaspie Saturday briefed Lebanon's Muslim leaders on efforts exerted by the American government to end the Lebanese crisis. "We as Americans are always hopeful we can do something to assist all the Lebanese to put an end to their tragedy," Glaspie told reporters after a two-hour meeting with acting Prime Minister Salim Hoss in west Beirut. Glaspie, who also met Parliament Speaker Hussein Hussein, said her talks "centred on the ideas that the American government has been discussing in Damascus and here in Lebanon."

Singapore asks for withdrawal of U.S. diplomat

SINGAPORE (R) — Singapore has asked Washington to withdraw a U.S. diplomat accused of interfering in the South-East Asian nation's domestic politics, a Singapore government statement said Saturday. The statement also called on Washington to "put a stop to all such activities." A spokesman for the U.S. embassy here said the United States would withdraw First Secretary Mason Hendrickson, although it did not accept the basis for the Singapore government's request.

Indian air force grounds French planes

NEW DELHI (AP) — Three French-piloted planes were forced to land in western India by Indian air force jets after one of the planes strayed off its declared flight path, the Times of India newspaper reported Saturday. The Times, an independent daily, said the Fairchild planes owned by Uni Air International, were forced down Thursday night near Ahmedabad, 800 kilometres southwest of New Delhi, and remain grounded pending an investigation.

Uprising leaders urge Palestinians to boost protests

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Leaders of the 21-week-old Palestinian uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza issued a call on Palestinians Saturday to step up the anti-occupation revolt through increased protests and "more attacks on the enemy."

Palestinian-American Mubarak Al Awad, who is facing expulsion from the occupied territories by the Israeli authorities, announced Saturday he was launching a hunger strike to protest the expulsion order. Nine Palestinians were wounded Saturday by beatings and rubber bullets in sporadic clashes with Israeli troops in the West Bank and Gaza, hospital sources said.



Israeli soldiers arrest a Palestinian woman in Ramallah

Bomb explodes at office of U.S.-owned firm in Kuwait

KUWAIT (Agencies) — An explosion blasted the offices of the U.S.-owned Avis rent-a-car company in downtown Kuwait Saturday and witnesses said at least one person was wounded. The Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) quoted an Interior Ministry spokesman as saying the blast caused "some damage" to a car rental office and the ceiling of the basement parking lot in the Al Dawliya complex. But he said there were no casualties. The spokesman did not name the car rental company. People living nearby said the explosion at the complex, a centre for several travel agencies opposite the Meridien Hotel, occurred at 7:23 a.m. (0423 GMT). The explosion hurled out the car rental office and damaged adjacent offices, eyewitnesses quoted by news agencies said. Broken glass and twisted metal littered the car park floor. It was the first bomb blast since April 27, the day after Saudi Arabia severed ties with Iran, when an explosion destroyed the offices of its airline Saudia. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the car park bomb.



Francois Mitterrand
By Douglas Hamilton
Renter

PARIS — Socialist Francois Mitterrand, supremely confident, remains favourite to win Sunday's election and become the first French president in modern times to secure a

Mitterrand still favourite despite Chirac 'triple coup'

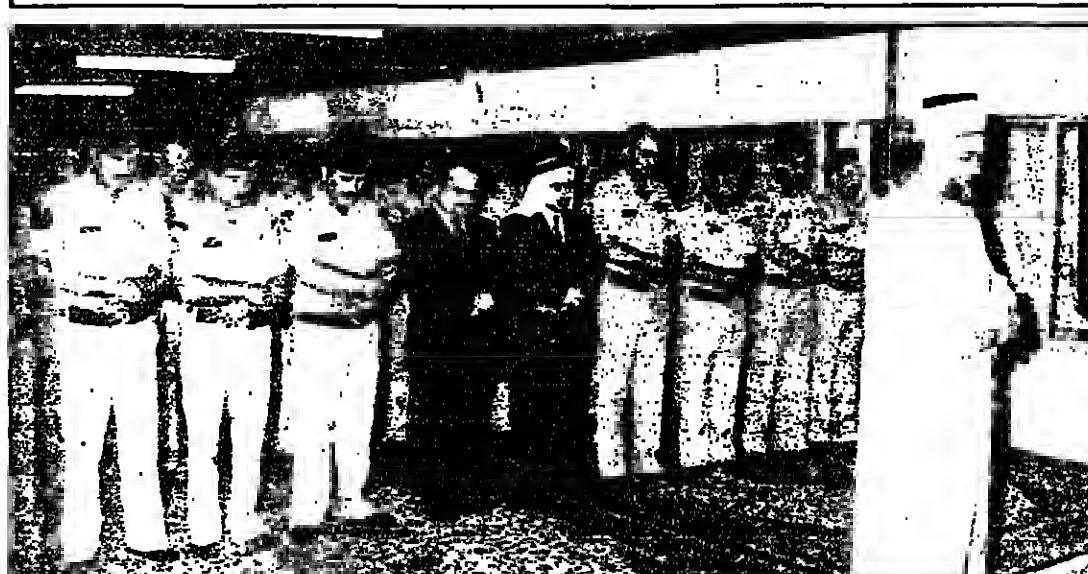
second mandate at the ballot box. But pollsters say the conservative challenger, Prime Minister Jacques Chirac, has narrowed Mitterrand's lead with a burst of dramatic action to impress voters in the last stage of the race. In the space of 48 hours, France won the release of three hostages held in Lebanon, rescued 23 lawmen held by separatists in a New Caledonia jungle cave, and defied New Zealand by ending the Pacific detention of a woman secret agent convicted of sabotage. The election rivals will symbolically bury the hatchet at a state ceremony Sunday as 38 million French voters decide which of them will be president for the next seven years. The two contenders are due to attend the annual World War II Armistice Day ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris three hours after voting begins at 8 a.m. (0600 GMT).

King reaffirms firm stands in meeting with journalists

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday met with world media representatives in Jordan and reaffirmed Jordan's position towards the Palestinian problem and the Middle East conflict as outlined in a six-point memorandum handed over to U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz last month. The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the King hosted an iftar for the journalists and answered questions concerning all problems in the region and Jordan's stand vis-a-vis these problems. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Zaid Rifai, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem, Court Minister Adnan Ahn Odeh and Information Minister Hani Khasawneh.



HM King Hussein



CROWN PRINCE HOSTS IFTAR: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, along with officers of the Armed Forces and Public Security and General Intelligence departments, performs Maghreb prayers at an iftar the Crown Prince hosted Saturday (Petra photo)

Jordan urges Security Council to condemn Israeli thrust into Lebanon

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Jordan has denounced Israel's recent incursion into Lebanon as a flagrant violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and called on the U.N. Security Council to condemn the Zionist state's action and to deter it from committing further acts of aggression. In a special debate Friday, Lebanon asked the Security Council to protect it from Israel, which sent thousands of troops backed by tanks, helicopter gunships and artillery across the border earlier this week. "It is no longer permissible that Lebanon and its people should remain at the mercy, at the whim of Israel's politicians... or their expansionist ambitions," Lebanese Ambassador Rachid Fakhoury told the council Friday. Addressing the Council, Jordan's U.N. representative, Abdullah Salah, said Israel's continued acts of aggression represent a defiance of the council and the international community at large. Israel's collective punishment policies imposed on civilian populations of southern Lebanon represent an extension of the Zionist state's repressive measures being practiced in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, Salah said. He said Israel was using all forms of atrocities and oppression in a bid to stifle the resistance and quell the uprising in the occupied territories. Israel's act of aggression in South Lebanon is designed as a ploy to divert world public attention from the atrocities being committed against the Palestinian people inside the occupied territories, Salah noted. He said that the dangerous situation in southern Lebanon would continue until Israel abides by council resolutions and withdraw its troops from all occupied Arab territories. According to Fakhoury, about 800 Israeli troops were still in southern Lebanon Thursday. Israel said it withdrew all of its troops Wednesday. Fakhoury said 3,000 Israeli troops and their Lebanese militia allies destroyed homes, orchards and crops and left homeless at least 500 families, including the entire population of Maydon. "Such an operation cannot be merely an incursion," Fakhoury said. "Indeed, it was an invasion." Fakhoury said Lebanon wants the council to condemn the raid, demand that Israel withdraw and take steps to prevent further Israeli aggression. The council was to resume debate Monday.

Ramadan reaffirms Saudi-Iraqi solidarity against Iranian threats

BAHRAIN (AP) — A high-ranking Iraqi official has affirmed that Saudi Arabia and Iraq are closing ranks against Iran, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported Saturday. The agency quoted First Deputy Premier Taha Yassin Ramadan as saying from Saudi Arabia, where he delivered a message to King Fahd, that the monarch affirmed the kingdom's support for Iraq "in defence of its sovereignty against the Iranian aggressors." Iraq and Iran have been at war for almost eight years, and Saudi Arabia ruptured its diplomatic ties with Iran April 26 after charging it with terrorism and subversion. Ramadan said the king emphasised Saudi Arabia's "keenness to place use all its potential to

U.S. to press Algiers over hijackers

WASHINGTON (R) — Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead said Saturday he would tell Algerian officials in a meeting next week that the hijackers of a Kuwaiti jet must be brought to justice. "We will set forth our views strongly," he told wire service reporters in an interview. Whitehead leaves Monday night on a trip that includes stops in Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Paris, where he will be part of the U.S. delegation to a meeting of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The United States and Britain were the fiercest critics of a deal last month under which Algeria allowed nine hijackers to leave the plane at Algiers before the dawn release of their hostages. The two governments deplored the idea that the hijackers, who killed two hostages and put another 31 through a 16-day ordeal, could escape without punishment. There were reports that the hijackers would be allowed to go to Lebanon or Iran but Whitehead said the United States was still not sure if they had left Algiers and hoped to find out more about their whereabouts. He stressed that his visit to Algeria — the first in his position as deputy secretary — was planned before the hijacking.

Jordan, PLO review contacts, peace effort

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) held a round of talks here Saturday as part of the ongoing consultations between the two sides, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. The Jordanian side to the meeting was headed by Prime Minister Zaid Rifai while PLO Executive Committee member Mahmoud Abbas (Ahu Mazen) headed the Palestinian side. During the meeting, held at the Prime Ministry, the PLO briefed Jordan on its contacts with the Soviet Union and Syria, Petra said. The briefing, made by Abbas, came upon a request by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, the agency said. Rifai reviewed Jordan's stand towards Middle East peace as contained in a six-point document. His Majesty King Hussein presented to the United States during a visit in April to Jordan by U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, Petra said. Abbas, who arrived here Friday, has been nominated to head the Palestinian side to the Jordanian-Palestinian committee to support the steadfastness of the Palestinian people living in the occupied territories, Petra said. Saturday's meeting was attended on the Jordanian side by Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri, Occupied Territories Affairs Minister Marwan Dudin, Information Minister Hani Khasawneh and Interior Minister Rajai Dajani and on the Palestinian side by PLO Executive Committee members Abdul Rabin Ahmad and Mohammad Milhem. Petra said the two sides agreed to continue the consultations.

Shultz likely to visit Middle East in June

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State George Shultz is planning a third shuttle trip to the Middle East in June in a fresh attempt to promote an American plan for peace in the region. A U.S. official said Friday a final decision was likely next week. Shultz would make stops in Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Syria, he said. Shultz would fly to the Middle East at the windup of the Moscow summit meeting June 2 and then attend a meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) foreign ministers in Madrid June 9-10, said the U.S. official, who spoke only on condition of anonymity. Two trips by Shultz to the Middle East this year failed to produce peace talks. But he refuses to give up. "Who's afraid to struggle against odds?" he said at the end of the last venture in April. "What am I saving myself for, anyway?" The State Department said Friday Shultz was still considering another trip to the Middle East despite the lack of success in pushing through the U.S. peace initiative. Spokesman Charles Redman told reporters that top officials continue to work on the peace initiative and that Ambassador Wat Cluvers has remained in the Middle East discussing the plan with all the major parties. "I see reporting telegrams every day in which these kinds of questions (about the peace plan) are being discussed. So we're still working on it," he said. He also said that Shultz, who launched the initiative last February in response to unprecedented violence in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, "keeps a close eye on developments as he decides what the next appropriate step might be." Shultz has travelled to the region three times in recent months to push the peace plan along but has not had much success.

Former French hostage readmitted to hospital

PARIS (Agencies) — One of three former French hostages freed after three years of captivity in Lebanon re-entered the hospital Saturday with nervous problems, while the other two recuperated from their ordeal with their families. Marcel Fontaine, 45, a French diplomat who was released Wednesday by his pro-Iranian captors in Beirut along with fellow diplomat Marcel Carton, 64, and journalist Jean-Paul Kauffmann, 44, was advised by doctors to take a complete rest for at least 48 hours. Fontaine's wife, Elaine, said he had been in good spirits since his release, but Friday might begin to get very nervous. He saw a doctor Saturday who ordered a "period of decompression" in the Val de Grace military hospital. Fontaine, Carton and Kauffmann returned to France Thursday and spent two days at Val de Grace undergoing extensive medical tests. All three were released late Friday afternoon. A spokesman for the American embassy in Paris said U.S. officials had spoken with Fontaine for three hours about the nine Americans still being held by kidnappers in Lebanon. American Terry Anderson, chief Middle East correspondent for the Associated Press, is the longest-held of the foreign hostages. Carton and Fontaine were (Continued on page 5)



Jacques Chirac

conservatives in disarray. The right-of-centre vote was badly fractured in the preliminary round, when far-right National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, campaigning on an anti-immigrant platform, stunned the nation by taking 14.4 per cent of the vote.

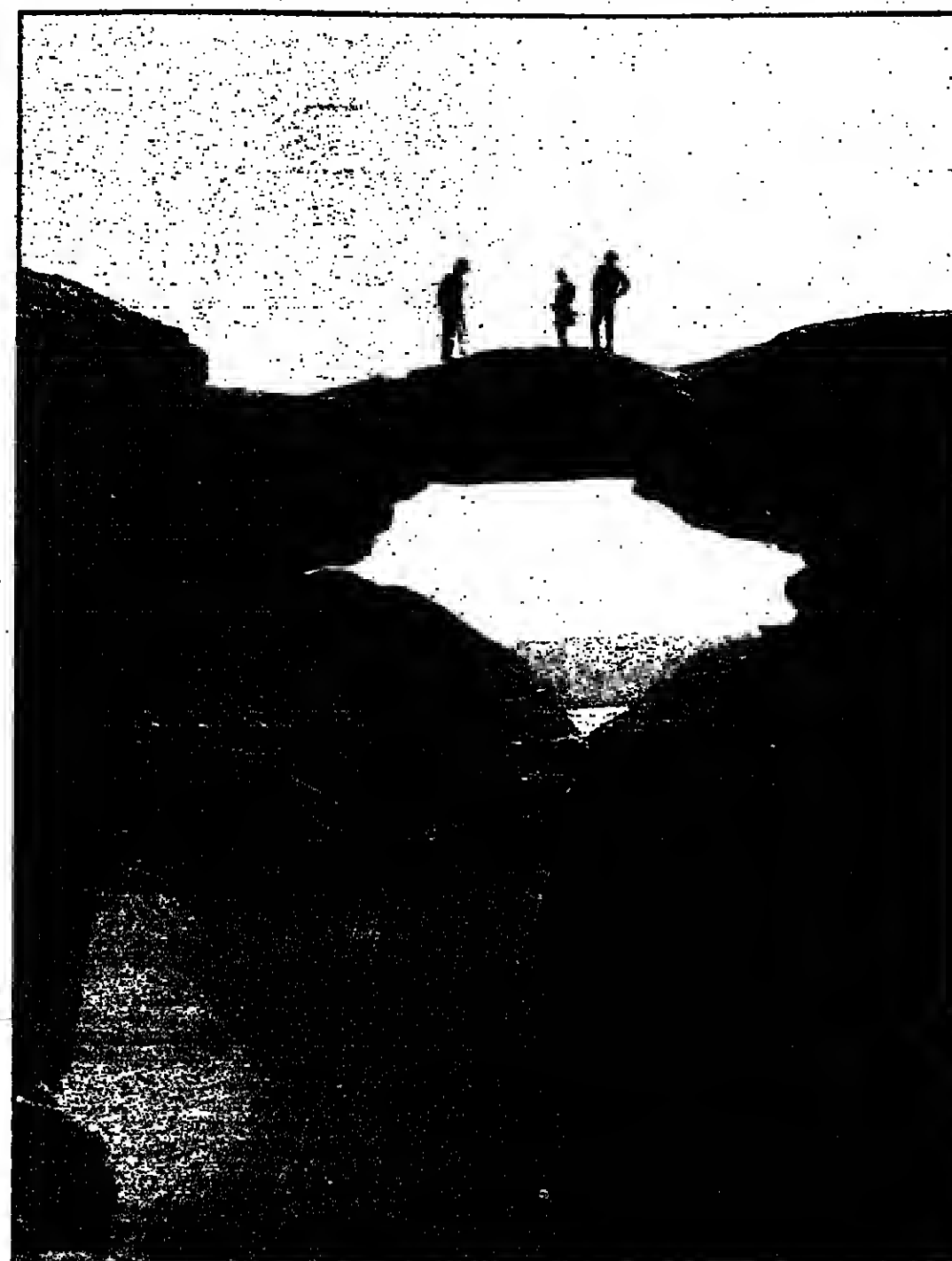
foreign policy compromises were the price. But commentators said Chirac's "triple coup" was altogether too bold to gain the lasting admiration that could translate into winning votes Sunday. Chirac ended a gruelling campaign marathon Friday with a three-city tour in 12 hours and a satellite link with 100,000 supporters in Paris. Former President Valery Giscard d'Estaing urged voters to back the prime minister. Mitterrand, mocking the nervousness of his rivals, said: "Those people are not confident about the prospects for Sunday." Although the finish is expected to be much closer than the Mitterrand 55 per cent to Chirac 45 per cent forecast by opinion polls a week ago, attention is already turning to the post-election period. Chirac is likely to step down Monday no matter what the

"Only my respect for democracy prevents me from talking of a new mandate before Sunday evening," he told supporters at his final, upbeat rally in the southwestern city of Toulouse Friday. At his final rally in Clermont-Ferrand, central France, Chirac underlined the "initiatives I have taken to restore respect for democracy and freedom and to combat terrorism." Appealing for every available vote, he warned that abstainers would have no right to complain if Sunday's result displeased them. "To abstain is to vote for the Socialist candidate," Chirac said. "Triple coup" The liberation of the Beirut hostages after three years imprisonment was unquestionably popular. Mitterrand carefully avoided echoing the suspicions of some in the Socialist camp who said cash ransoms and

Polls close at 8 p.m. (1800 GMT) and accurate computer projections of the result are expected within a half hour. Their joint appearance will symbolise a political ceasefire at the end of an extraordinary election campaign, which pitted an incumbent president against his own prime minister for the first time. Mitterrand, 71, a moderate socialist, was forced to share power in the final two years of his 1981 mandate with right-winger Chirac, 55, after the Socialist Party lost power in a March 1986 general election. Rancour pent up over their two years of involuntary "cohabitation" government was vented in the final stages of the campaign with mutual charges of lying to the nation. In the first round of the election April 24, which reduced the field of candidates from nine to two, he beat Chirac with 34 per cent to 19.9 per cent of the vote.



A climber at Wadi Rum



Hikers and climbers wander in the wonders of Wadi Rum

Where only goats dare climb

By Najwa Najjar
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A way of life for the bedouins in Wadi Rum has increasingly become a popular sport for mountain climbers from Europe. The first non-Arab to climb the mountains in Wadi Rum, Tony Howard, was recently in Jordan to review his guidebook on the area and to discover trekking trails as a means of promoting tourism in the region.

Howard, who works for a manufacturer of mountaineering equipment, first contacted the Ministry of Tourism on the prospects of mountain climbing in Wadi Rum in 1984 after seeing "Lawrence of Arabia," which was filmed in the area in the early 1960s. Ministry officials invited Howard and three other climbers. The ministry had already been looking into mountaineering in the Wadi Rum.

Howard, who has been climbing for 34 years, described the area as "impressive" and "beautiful." "Wadi Rum is completely different to other mountain areas. The rock is good, compli-

cated and not straightforward. It is fascinating from the desert to the mountains as you are constantly finding unexpected features such as rocks with different colours and shapes, meadows of flowers on the tops of the mountains, and ibex (goats with big horns) which are almost extinct now," he said.

He found that climbing in Jordan combines both the difficulty and challenge of climbing coupled with adventure and excitement. "Those (mountains) make the best climbs," he said.

Climbing is not the only thrill that Wadi Rum offers. Howard found that living with the bedouins for a few nights was "magic." "Being in the wilderness, in solitude or with the bedouins, and riding camels are part of the safari adventure holidays which are becoming increasingly popular in Europe," he said.

Howard expressed concern over an intention for building a national wildlife park in Wadi Rum. "I agree it should be done, but I am concerned when it is done that it does not interfere with the lives nor impose restric-

tions on the local inhabitants.

Guidebook

"I was so impressed that I thought there should be a guidebook," he said. He returned to Jordan in 1985 and 1986, sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism, and in 1987 the guidebook was published.

Two thousand copies of the guidebook have been printed, of which 500 have been distributed by the Ministry of Tourism and an additional 500 have been sold to other European countries. Howard noted the absence of the guidebook in Jordan. "Some climbers have come here expecting to find the guidebook, but did not."

However, Howard has been satisfied with the feedback he received on the guidebook.

In addition to the guidebook, Howard has been active in England promoting mountain climbing in Wadi Rum by organising lectures and slide shows for interested or prospective climbers, walkers and tourists. "There are not sensational numbers of tourists because climbing is a special-

ised area," he said.

However, Howard expects the number of tourists to Wadi Rum, which to date numbers 100, to rise. "Climbers generate their own publicity. This in turn will encourage walkers and the gener-

al public," he said.

According to him some of the best climbers, Doug Scott from Britain, Wolfgang Nairz from Austria, and Miguel Gallego from Spain have been to Wadi Rum and "have said that the best

climbs were here."

The Ministry of Tourism has invited professional mountain guides from 12 European countries, who have brought with them four groups of climbers in 1987-88. Additionally, films on climbing the mountains of Wadi Rum have been made by Austrian, French and Swiss television.

"Everyone is excited about the area because it is new, and to find some place new is unique to climbers who know the whole world. There are some mountains which have not been climbed, and that is exciting to all climbers... to be the first to climb it," said Howard.

Howard and other climbers who have been in the region, have further promoted Wadi Rum by writing to specialised magazines on mountain climbing in Jordan. Howard was asked by Jasmine Tours in England to discover trails for trekking. "We have been to Zarka, Petra and Sinai, and we are looking into old caravan trails from Shobak to Petra and to Aqaba."



A camelback trek on the colourful sands of Wadi Rum

Society strives for self-reliance

The following article is reprinted from the magazine, *Tauqiya*. The magazine is published by the Geneva-based The Welfare Association, a philanthropic foundation established in 1983.

SELF-RELIANCE must be the aim of both individuals and institutions. So goes the philosophy of the Society of Inaash Al Usra (renaissance of the family) in the West Bank town of Al-Bireh.

Inaash Al Usra, known to many Palestinians and Arabs outside the occupied territories by the embroidery it markets, was set up in 1965, two years before the occupation. It is run by a dynamic group of Palestinian women, but there is no doubt that, just as the Society is now powered by its own recently purchased generators, the central powerhouse is Samiha Salameh Khalil, known to all as Umm Khalil.

Through sheer force of personality, Umm Khalil has pushed through fund-raising efforts and lobbied reluctant bureaucrats to make Inaash Al Usra the establishment it is today. Her activities have earned her many years under town arrest, unable even to travel to see her children.

Putting self-reliance into practice

Inaash Al Usra was set up with a double agenda. To assist those made needy by war and occupation, and to improve the status of women. Umm Khalil's personal

dedication is so great that, during one of the Society's financial crises, when there was no longer any money to purchase food for needy children under the Society's wing, she went on hunger strike to publicise their plight.

Although a successful fundraiser, Inaash Al Usra wants to practise what it preaches. Many of its activities provide income-generating opportunities for individuals to stand on their own feet. By the same token, the Society wants to stand on its own feet, without having to rely constantly on the generosity of donors.

Through projects like its biscuit factory, Inaash Al Usra has come some way along the route to self-reliance. In the long run, such productive activities should be able to sustain the Society's charitable and cultural activities, and nearly 100 full-time employees.

Inaash Al Usra's earliest productive project was in Palestinian peasant embroidery. By now, some 4,000 women in villages and refugee camps have been drawn into the project, which provides work at home for them and the possibility to add to family earnings (some cover nearly 50 per cent of their family needs through embroidery).

Small industries

After a shaky start, the Society's biscuit factory developed into a profit-making enterprise, providing, by 1986, full-time employment for 17 men and women and part-time work for another 20. The Society soon found that production did not keep up with demand — although in the summer demand falls off with more fresh fruit on the market. The

biscuit factory has been expanded to keep up with demand region-wide.

The biscuit enterprise was followed up by a clothing factory, which also got off to a shaky start until managers learned how to correctly assess and meet market needs. By 1987, it was covering most of its costs, and employees had acquired the skills to produce the type of garments required by the market. Managers had also come to grips with the timing of market needs, producing clothes for the winter in summer and vice versa.

The fact that projects may meet some difficulty at the start is no reason not to undertake them — deeds, not words, insists Umm Khalil. Throughout, the Society has preferred to act first, and then present donors with results.

By now, the Society's productive activities — including manufacture of home products and biscuits, embroidery, sewing and knitting — cover over two-thirds of its expenses. Inaash Al Usra also plans for a third small industry, a frozen food plant, which poses a special challenge in terms of the type of building and equipment necessary.

Social and cultural activities

Inaash sponsored several social and cultural activities before setting up its small industries. It runs a kindergarten for some 200 children up to the age of six. It runs vocational training centres where women can learn sewing, knitting, and embroidery as well as training as secretaries and as beauticians. Nearly 300 women attend the centres and the Society estimates that 80 per cent find work after graduation.

The Society has also been working to eradicate illiteracy among women in towns, villages and refugee camps, and uses these centres to further animal husbandry and agricultural production. It has held 11 bazaars, sales from which also help to cover costs.

Equally importantly, the Society runs a major relief programme for families who have lost breadwinners to the war and occupation, either through death or imprisonment. Nearly 1,000 families are helped in this way; many through sponsorship programmes from individuals and institutions abroad. The Society also helps to fund university student fees. It established a home in 1984 for the daughters of martyrs, with housing for some 150 girls between the ages of four and 18.

Since 1972, the Society has administered a cultural and folklore department and has brought out several publications on folklore and social development. It has recently set up a Palestinian museum which houses detailed displays of traditional Palestinian homes. Its library contains over 6,000 volumes, an occasional journal is produced, and the Society has a small folkloric troupe.

TV & RADIO

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME ONE

14:00 Koran
14:20 Programme review
14:25 Cartoons
14:50 Children's series
15:05 Religious programme
15:45 Ramadan puzzle
16:00 Arabic play
16:40 Cooking programme
17:00 Religious series
17:30 Health and Fasting
17:40 Arabic comedy
18:30 Ramadan contest
19:00 Religious programmes
19:35 Varieties and programme review
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Arabic series
21:30 Puzzles from all over the world
22:00 Historical series
23:00 News summary in Arabic
23:30 Arabic series
23:55 Arabic play

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Rue Carnot
18:30 L'Ecole des Fans
19:00 News in French
19:15 Les Sciences a la une (documentary)
19:30 News in Hebrew
19:45 Varieties
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 My Husband and I
21:10 World in Flashes
22:00 News in English
22:20 Osara
23:30 Richman, Poorman

RADIO JORDAN

855 KHz. AM & 99 MHz FM & partly on 95.60 KHz. SW Tel: 77411-19

07:00 Light Music
07:30 Newsdesk
08:00 Morning Show
08:30 News Summary
11:05 In Concert
12:00 News Summary
12:45 Pop Talk
13:00 News Summary
13:30 Pop Session contd.
14:00 News Bulletin
14:10 Instrumentals
14:30 Science Report
15:00 Concert Hour
16:00 News Summary
16:05 Instrumentals
16:30 Old Favourites
17:00 Listeners' Choice
18:00 News Summary
18:05 Rhythm and Blues
19:00 Newsdesk

WHAT'S GOING ON

TODAY'S EVENTS

19:30 Date with a Star
20:00 Evening Show
21:00 News Summary
21:45 Evening Show continued
22:00 News Summary
22:45 Evening Show continued
23:00 News Summary
23:57 News Headline
24:00 Close Down

BBC WORLD SERVICE

639, 720, 1323 KHz

07:00 Newsdesk 07:30 The Seven Ages
08:00 07:45 Reflections 07:50 Financial Review 08:00 World News 08:09
20:00 News Summary
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CULTURAL CENTRES

Royal Cultural Centre .. Tel. 661026/7
American Centre Library .. 64157/1
British Council .. 636147/8
French Cultural Centre .. 637009
Goethe Institute .. 641993
Soviet Cultural Centre .. 644203
Spanish Cultural Centre .. 641793
Turkish Cultural Centre .. 639777
Haya Arts Centre .. 665195
Husseini Youth City .. 667181/6
Y.W.C.A. .. 641793
Y.W.M.C.A. .. 642511
Amman Municipal Library .. 637111
Univ. of Jordan Library .. 843555

MUSEUMS

"Children's Heritage and Science Museum." Fun and knowledge for all ages, plus a small planetarium at the Haya Arts Centre. Open all week 9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Closed on Friday.

Folklore Museum: Jewellery and costumes over 100 years old. Also models from Madaba and Jerash (4th to 18th centuries). The Roman Theatre, Amman. Opening hours: 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. Year-round. Tel. 641601.

Jordan Archaeological Museum: Has an excellent collection of the antiquities of Jordan. Jabal Al Qal'a (Citadel Hill). Opening hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Fridays and official holidays) 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Closed Tuesdays.

Jordan National Gallery: Contains a collection of paintings, ceramics, and sculptures by contemporary Islamic artists from most of the Muslim countries and a collection of paintings by 19th Century orientalist artists. Munda-

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08) 53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS ROYAL JORDANIAN (RJ) FLIGHTS (Terminal 1)

10:15 Aqaba (RJ)
10:30 Kuwait (RJ)
10:40 Jeddah (RJ)
10:55 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
11:00 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
17:30 Los Angeles, Chicago, Vienna (RJ)
17:45 Cairo (RJ)
18:00 London (RJ)
18:30 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:00 Paris (RJ)
19:05 Frankfurt (RJ)
19:15 Brussels, Geneva (RJ)
19:30 Madrid, Rome (RJ)
00:55 Baghdad (RJ)

OTHER FLIGHTS (Terminal 2)

09:10 Berlin, Larnaca (IF)
10:35 Cairo (MS)
11:40 Damascus (AZ)
12:30 Baghdad (IA)
13:45 Sharjah, Doha (GF)
14:35 Kuwait (LN)
16:00 Jeddah (SV)
17:35 Athens (OA)
18:30 Damascus (add.) (RU)
19:25 Frankfurt (LH)
20:15 Beirut (ME)
22:00 Cairo (MS)
01:00 London, Cairo (BA)

REPARTURES ROYAL JORDANIAN (RJ) FLIGHTS (Terminal 1)

08:00 Aqaba (RJ)
12:00 Vienna, New York (RJ)
12:40 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
13:30 Cairo (RJ)
20:35 Kuwait, Dhahran (RJ)
20:45 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
20:50 Bahrain, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
20:55 Baghdad (RJ)
21:00 Larnaca (RJ)
21:00 Jeddah, Sana'a (RJ)
21:15 Cairo (RJ)
22:15 Damascus (RJ)

PRAYER TIMES

04:00 Fajr
05:37 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:32 Dhuhr
16:14 'Asr
19:27 Maghreb
20:56 'Isha

MONEY EXCHANGE

Saturday rates
Local selling rates in Jds

Belgian franc 96.5 / 98.8
Dutch guilder 179.3 / 186.1
French franc 59.4 / 61.5
Italian lire 27.1 / 28
Japanese yen (for 100) 271.3 / 283
Swedish crown 57.7 / 59.7
Swiss franc 241.9 / 250.9
U.K. sterling pound 630.9 / 653.5
U.S. dollar 339.2 / 350.6
W. German mark 201.8 / 209.1

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The weather during the day will be rather fair and sunny with slight drop in temperature towards the evening. In Aqaba, the winds will be northwesterly moderate and calm seas.

Min./max. temp.
Amman 13 / 27
Aqaba 14 / 35
Deserts 11 / 30
Jordan Valley 21 / 32

USEFUL TELEPHONE NOS.

EMERGENCIES

'Amman governorate 891228
Amman Civil Defence 198, 199
Civil Defence Irbid 271293, 273131
Civil Defence Qadisiyah 770733
Civil Defence Deir Alia 57306
Ambulance 193, 775111
Fire department 77525
Amman downtown fire brigade 63041
Blood Bank 778303
Civil Defence rescue 661111
Police headquarters 622900-3
Police rescue 192, 62111, 63777
Police headquarters 639141
Traffic police 8969001
Electric Power Co. 636381/4, 624881
Municipal water complaints 7711258
Queen Alia Int. Airport (08) 5333000

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Arafat Ashabab 622507
Dr. Adil Dabbous 893644
Dr. Yousef Hourani 625478
Dr. Akram Samhan ()
First pharmacy 603912
First pharmacy 641541
Al Azaza pharmacy 637025
Naboukha pharmacy 626762
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Vaccines pharmacy 644945
Shamsat pharmacy 657660

TAXIS

Akram taxi 603911
Zaid taxi 664476
Khayyat taxi 641541
Caro taxi 619157
Jordan taxi 623050
Kurdi taxi 841309

HOSPITALS

Husseini Medical Centre 813813/2
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn. 64281/6
Alkhil Maternity, J. Amn. 64241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malinas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsat 664171/4
Shamsat Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845/6
Al-Muasher Hospital 6672779
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664166
Italian, Al-Muhajirah 77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77111/26
Army, Marja 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155

GENERAL

Jordan Television 77311/19
Radio Jordan 77411/19
Ministry of Tourism 642311
Hotel complaints 666412
Price complaints 661476
Telephone information 12
Jordan and Middle East calls 10
Overseas calls 17
Repair service 11

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in Jds per kg.

Apple (French) 400 / 260
Apple (green) 450 / 400
Apple (Lebanese) 300 / 250
Banana 350 / 300
Bazana (Mekammar) 300 / 240
Beans (broad) 160 / 120
Cabbage 130 / 100
Carrot 170 / 120
Cauliflower (white) 160 / 120
Cucumber 800 / 600
Figs (green) 170 / 120
Garden cress 600 / 500
Dates (2 kgs) 110 / 80
Eggplant (large) 110 / 80
Eggplant (small) 130 / 100
Garlic (green) 160 / 100

Lemon 250 / 200
Mallow 250 / 180
Mint 160 / 100
Onion (green) 120 / 80
Onion (dry) 120 / 80
Oranges (local) 250 / 200
Oranges (Shamsat) 250 / 200
Peas 250 / 200
Pepper (hot) 250 / 200
Pepper (sweet) 250 / 200
Potato 250 / 200
Radish 250 / 200
Spinach 250 / 200
Strawberry 250 / 200
Tomatoes 250 / 200
Vine leaves 250 / 200

King condoles Di'mes family

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein has delegated Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ad Ibn Zaid to convey his condolences to the Di'mes family on the death of the late Wadi Di'mes. Di'mes was killed this week while serving as member of the Upper House of Parliament. He died in the West Bank town of Beit Jala where he once served as mayor.

Chances for locust invasion are reduced

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — The director of the Agricultural Department in the Amman area said Saturday that surveillance teams operating in the desert regions of the Kingdom have not spotted any swarms of locusts heading towards the country.

These teams are in constant touch with the Ministry of Agriculture, providing continuous reports on the situation, the director said.

The department director, who is also head of an operation room set up at the Ministry of Agriculture to monitor the locust movements, said that the Jeddah regional centre for combating the pest has reported that no new swarms of locusts had invaded Saudi Arabian territory after May 2, and that the locust invasion in Saudi Arabia and Egypt has virtually stopped.

Agriculture Minister Marwan Hmoud Friday confirmed that Jordan was free of locusts.

He said the ministry has formed specialised teams stationed along the Jordanian-Saudi Arabian border to monitor the situation and to report to the operation room.

The Armed Forces and the Royal Jordanian Air Force are involved in arrangements to fight off the locusts if they enter Jordanian territory, the minister said.

Specialists believe that a swarm covering an area of one square kilometre might contain up to 40 million locusts which eat up to 120 tonnes of vegetation.

Locusts are known to have invaded vast areas of land in Africa, and Asia, stretching from Mauritania in West Africa to Saudi Arabia in Asia.

The Ministry of Agriculture was alerted to the situation when three swarms of locusts were reported to have entered Saudi Arabian territory, reaching Tabuk, close to the Jordanian borders.

Ajlouni opens scientific book exhibition at JUST

IRBID (Petra) — A scientific book exhibition was opened at Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) by University President Kamel Ajlouni.

The five-day exhibition displays thousands of books covering all branches of medicine, engineering, computers, and reference books, encyclopaedia, dictionaries and guidebooks, which are useful for university students.

Later Ajlouni opened an exhibition displaying different designs by students of the university's Fine Arts Department.

Several deans and professors and an audience of invited guests attended the opening ceremonies.

Khaddam elected president of labour federation council

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions has elected Abdul Halim Khaddam as president of the federation's Central Council and Samir Qarden as the federation's secretary general.

Mazen Maajia and Mohammad Bani Hani have been elected as first and second deputy secretaries general respectively.

The federation's general assembly which convened Friday also elected 12 members to serve as federation Executive Bureau members until the end of 1990. The federation includes 17 different unions with more than 130,000 members.

Yugoslav delegation concludes visit

AMMAN (Petra) — A Yugoslav pharmaceutical delegation, recently concluded a visit to Jordan.

During the visit the delegation met with president of the Jordanian Pharmacists Association (JPA) President Tayseer Al Hamsi and dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Jordan, and discussed with them boosting cooperation in the pharmaceutical field and exchanging delegations between the two countries.

NATIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

CONDOLENCES: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Saturday assigned the director of his office, Michael Hamarneh, to convey his condolences to the Odeh family over the death of Dr. Rifat Odeh. Iraqi Ambassador to Jordan Ghafeel Hussein Saturday conveyed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's condolences to the Odeh family. Dr. Odeh was president of the Jordanian Popular Committee for Solidarity with Iraq.

TRAINING COURSE: A one-week training course in accounting and finance for non-financial managers began Saturday at the Jordanian Institute of Management.

ELECTRICAL SERVICES: The Irbid District Electricity Company (IDECO) has started technical works to make electrical services available in Mafraq, Hmeid and Al Karm villages in the Mafraq governorate. The cost of the venture, to be completed in about two months, is JD 110,000.

MAN SENTENCED: The military court has sentenced Ahmad Shehri Hmeidan to eight years imprisonment and fined him JD 15,000 for acquiring heroin. The sentence has been endorsed by the military governor.

HEALTH CENTRE: The health department in the Mafraq governorate has started work on a project for the construction of a new building for the department and a comprehensive health centre. The JD 97,000 project will be built on a 10-dunum area.

Ramadan reaffirms solidarity

(Continued from page 1)

Holy City of Mecca, where the Saudi monarch is currently spending the latter part of the holy month of Ramadan.

Ramadan told INA on his return home that the king was keen to "consolidate the brotherly relations between the two countries."

"King Fahd has renewed Saudi Arabia's support for Iraq in its holy defence of its sovereignty and territory and (said) that Iran's rejection of peace efforts and its continuation of the war had proved its aggressive and expansionist policy," Ramadan said.

Iraq has praised Saudi Arabia's decision April 26 to cut diplomatic relations with Iran.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein told the Egyptian magazine Al-Mussawwar in an interview published Friday that the Saudi decision was "a daring and courageous step... we call on each Arab and Muslim to follow suit."

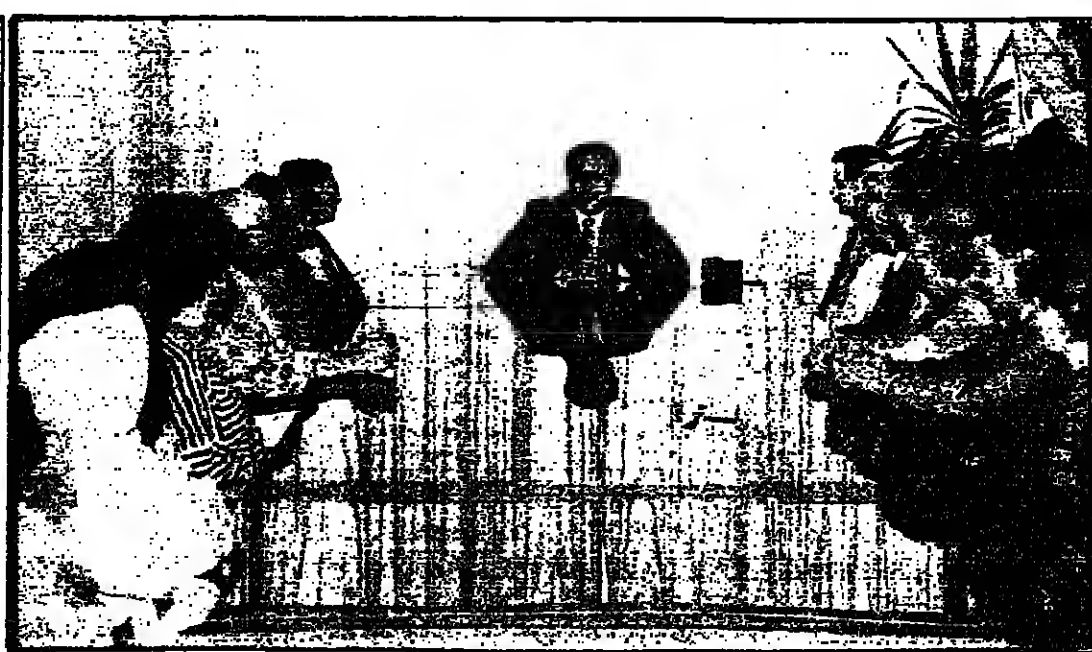
Iraq reports shelling

On the battlefield, Iraq accused Iran of shelling the town of Darbandikhan in northern Iraq Saturday for a second consecutive day.

A high command communiqué said Iraq would retaliate at the "proper" time.

A military spokesman denied an Iranian report that Iraqi gunners bombed the Iranian town of Banah Friday night and killed two people.

He told Reuters that Baghdad had not fired on any town since April 20, when Iraq began a unilateral ceasefire in the war of the cities.



Information Minister Hani Khasawneh Saturday meets with representatives of Arab League organisations and Council of Arab Economic Unity officials in Amman (Petra photo).

Khasawneh voices Jordan's keenness to support CAEU

AMMAN (Petra) — Information Minister Hani Khasawneh said Saturday that the Jordanian government was keen on supporting and assisting the Amman-based Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU), which strives to achieve Arab economic integration and promote the work of the Arab common market.

Jordan strives to promote collective Arab action, and through supporting the CAEU it hopes to achieve that goal, the minister said at a meeting with representatives of various Arab League organisations and CAEU senior officials.

Khasawneh, who on Thursday resigned his post as CAEU Secretary General to which he had been appointed before becoming minister, said that Arab League organisations should be helped to forge ahead and help the Arab nation confront the challenges of the modern age.

He said the Arab League organisations have been facing financial crises due to the general situation in the Arab region. "But it is hoped that hardships will be overcome through

perseverance and serious work and through cooperation among Arab states."

The minister paid tribute to the great efforts exerted by the CAEU's former Secretary General Mahdi Ubeidi and the CAEU officials.

Arab ministers of economy will hold a meeting early next month to decide on Khasawneh's resignation and the appointment of a successor.

Jordan has nominated former Minister Hassan Ibrahim for the post.

Interior Ministry, Sports City interchanges to open on May 25

AMMAN (J.T.) — The two interchanges at the Interior Ministry and the Sports City will be formally opened for traffic on May 25, Independence Day, at a ceremony to be held under royal patronage, according to a report in Al Rai Arabic daily.

The paper said that work on the Sports City interchange is almost completed, and requires a few more days for the finishing touches before it will be reopened for traffic, but that the other interchange will need more days to complete. Greater Amman Municipality's teams are hard at work on asphaltting the roads, helping the contractors with the final stages of the two projects which should be ready before May 25, according to the paper quoting municipality sources.

It said that workers are doing day and night shifts around the clock to complete the work, and that the Sports City interchange

will be opened for traffic by the end of next week.

Work on the two interchanges started in October 1985 and the contract was for an Indian construction company to complete the work in 22 months, but amendments were introduced to the projects later on, requiring an increase of 35 per cent of JD 850,000, and an extended date for completion.

This was in excess of the JD 5 million, the original estimate of the project's cost.

The project involved the construction of overpasses and underpasses at the Interior Ministry roundabout and the Sports City junction, and realigning the entrance to the Sports City.

The project at the Ministry of Interior roundabout involved an overpass linking the Queen Alia Street (towards the Sports City) with Jabel Hussein's main Khaled Ibn Al Walid Street, and a four-

lane underpass connecting the Queen Noor Street (from the Third Circle to the Ministry of Interior roundabout) with Al Istiklal Street.

The project at the Sports City junction comprised building an overpass, linking the Queen Alia Street with the University of Jordan Street and an underpass connecting Sharif Nasser Street (from Shmeisani towards the junction) and the Unknown Soldier Street (towards Zarka).

The third project involved realigning the existing ramp at the entrance of the Sports City, which required building a new access road, and rearranging the existing intersection at the entrance.

The World Bank financed the project which was sponsored by the Greater Amman Municipality. The Indian Uttam Singh Dugai and Company of India carried out the project.

Cabinet endorses agreement with Indonesia

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Saturday endorsed an agreement on cultural and scientific cooperation between Jordan and Indonesia which was initiated last March.

The agreement provides for an exchange of expertise and information in all scientific and cultural matters that would enhance ties between the two countries.

The Cabinet also decided that the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Secretary General Abdul Salam Al Ahbadi should

take part in a conference on peace which is due to open in Baghdad on May 25.

A group of scholars and intellectuals from Arab and Islamic countries are to take part in the three-day conference.

The cabinet approved of a general plan for employment and administration at the Jordanian Ports Corporation and the Water Authority of Jordan for 1988.

The Cabinet also appointed Mahmoud Ibrahim as mayor of the town of Samma in the Irbid governorate.

Jordan takes part in Rome talks on diseases

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan took part in a meeting by a special committee studying diseases common to man and animal which was held in Rome.

Dr. Suleiman Qub'ain, director of the Health Ministry's Primary Health Care Department, who attended the meeting, said that the participants discussed diseases of this nature prevailing in the Mediterranean region, and means of stemming their spread and protection against them.

Qub'ain said that he presented a working paper to the meeting featuring different diseases common to man and animal in Jordan, and focusing attention on cooperation between different concerned authorities in the Kingdom to combat the spread of infections.

The paper, Qub'ain said, included Jordanian projects and studies in eliminating such diseases.

Law proposes giving inmates 48-hour parole

AMMAN (J.T.) — A new draft law on prisons in Jordan proposes granting inmates parole for 48 hours for humanitarian reasons, according to a report in Al-Dustour Arabic daily.

The report said that there should be a bail for such action that can be approved only by the

Interior Minister. The draft law also authorises the minister to cut short a prison term if the inmate had served at least three quarters of the sentence in jail, and can order the release of a convicted person who had served 20 years from his life sentence with hard labour, provided the inmate had displayed good conduct in jail, according to the report.

The law which gives full details about the duties of prison wardens and prison authorities, states that a person sentenced to death should be isolated from the other inmates day and night, and provides for medical treatment and other basic requirements for the inmates.

Cerebral Palsy Foundation to expand services to Karak, Tafileh and Ma'an
CPF to open new centre in Salt in July

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — The Cerebral Palsy Foundation (CPF) plans to open a new centre in Salt in July 1988, to offer assistance to cerebral palsy victims in some 160 families, and a similar one in Karak, southern Jordan, according to CPF President Fakhri Bilbeisi.

He said there are similar plans for opening two additional centres at Tafileh and Ma'an.

In cooperation with the Al Hussein Society for the Rehabilitation of the Physically Handicapped, the CPF will start a mobile service, with specialists touring rural regions of the Kingdom, conducting examinations and diagnosing different cases. They are also expected to offer treatment and guidance, Bilbeisi noted.

He said that work on a national integrated centre for examining children exposed to handicaps and diagnosing their cases will start before the end of 1988.

The projected national centre, which is expected to cost JD 500,000 will offer a variety of medical specialisations for diagnosing and treating all cases, and will have a special unit for offering rehabilitation to victims of cerebral palsy, Bilbeisi said.

It has become necessary to

open this centre which, he said, can detect early symptoms of handicaps among children in view of an increase in the number of handicapped cases, Bilbeisi noted.

He said the CPF's four centres around the Kingdom have examined and diagnosed 3,200 cases and it was found that the earlier the children are examined the better the chances are for their rehabilitation and complete cure.

Nearly 29 per cent of the handicapped children examined by these centres proved to be free of cerebral palsy, but suffering from hereditary diseases which could safely be cured if diagnosed and treated before the age of three, Bilbeisi noted.

The opening of the national centre is upon recommendation by a World Health Organisation's (WHO) team of specialists who visited Jordan in 1979, Bilbeisi

pointed out.

He said the projected centre will have a unit for providing mental health services in addition to classes for children with different disabilities in the pre-school age.

The CPF projects are financed through donations from individuals and institutions in the Kingdom and abroad, and helped by the Health Ministry which provides doctors and specialists to conduct free medical examinations and treatment. The ministry also offers beds in hospitals for that end, Bilbeisi noted.

He said that the Royal Medical Services help by conducting laboratory tests and surgical operations. The General Union of Voluntary Societies and the Ministry of Social Development offer the CPF different forms of assistance.

The CPF, which was established in 1977, requires at least JD 150,000 annually to cover the expenses of treatment for cerebral palsy victims, who are on the increase every year, Bilbeisi noted.

He said that last year the CPF examined 1,088 children and carried out 40 surgical operations.

Jordan marks anniversary of ICRC today

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — Jordan Sunday marks the 125th anniversary of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as a worldwide independent humanitarian organisation.

On the eve of the occasion Dr. Ahmad Abu Qoura, President of the Jordanian National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) said that the ICRC now comprises 250 Red Cross and Red Crescent societies in 145 countries of the world, grouping more than a million members.

He said these societies are grouped to carry out humanitarian services to different nations especially during wars.

These countries have signed agreements in Geneva pledging to respect and protect the victims of conflicts, Abu Qoura noted.

He said this year's occasion coincides with the JNRCS's 40th anniversary, and plans have been made for different activities in Jordan, including the opening of a health centre and graduating groups of people who have been trained in providing first aid.

The activities also include lectures, and voluntary work to highlight the work of the JNRCS and the need to increase blood donations.

The Geneva-based ICRC was founded in 1863 by Henri Dunant and four of his friends.

The original purpose of the committee was to assist wounded soldiers on the battlefield.

The present activities of the ICRC consist in giving legal protection and material assistance to military and civilian victims of wars.



Dr. Ahmad Abu Qoura

The ICRC promoted the foundation in each country national committees of the Red Cross, which later became the National Societies of the Red Cross and National Societies of the Red Crescent in Islamic countries.

As well as providing medical aid and emergency food supplies in many countries, the ICRC plays an important part in inspecting prison conditions, and in tracing missing persons.

The ICRC endeavours to prevent and alleviate human suffering around the world, to protect

life and health and to ensure respect for human rights.

In the course of its service, the ICRC makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions and does not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

The ICRC's work is financed by a voluntary annual grant from governments, parties to the Geneva Convention; voluntary contributions from National Red Cross societies and by gifts and legacies from private individuals.

Jreisat: Jordan produces 500 bpd of crude oil from Hamzeh Fields

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan at present produces some 500 barrels-per-day of crude oil from its Hamzeh oil fields but imports 59,500 barrels every day from Saudi Arabia and Iraq to meet the domestic requirements, according to Natural Resources Authority NRA President Kamal Jreisat.

The NRA is enlisting the help of big oil companies to find oil in a number of regions and will continue to work diligently to cut the Kingdom's annual oil bill, Jreisat said in an interview with Al-Dustour Arabic daily published Saturday.

Since 1947, Jordan has enlisted the help of eight different oil firms to prospect for oil in the country, but so far they all have failed to find oil in commercial quantities, Jreisat added.

The search for oil in the Kingdom started in 1947 when agreements were signed with a number of foreign firms and several wells were drilled on both banks of the River Jordan, but no positive result was achieved, Jreisat pointed out.

"But these oil firms have vast experience and can provide the machinery and skilled manpower to help carry out fast exploration. For this reason, their work is needed to help the Kingdom find oil," Jreisat added.

According to Jreisat, Jordan produces some oil and gas from Azraq but most of the gas is produced from the Risha Fields close to the Iraqi-Jordanian borders.

Exploration at Risha region did not reveal the presence of any oil, but disclosed the existence of gas at a depth of 2,663 metres.

So far the NRA has pumped up 12 million cubic metres of gas annually but the wells could be developed to produce up to 15 million cubic metres annually, Jreisat noted.

In March the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources announced that the discovery of large quantities of natural gas in Al Risha area delayed the execution of the second phase of the Aqaba Thermal Power Station until next year.

It said that preliminary indication calls for further planning and more long term studies with the aim of diverting the Jordanian economy towards the use of natural gas.

Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Hisham Al-Khatib announced last month that Jordan will start using natural gas from Al Risha Fields for power that generation early next year.

Addressing the third Jordanian geological conference in Amman, Khatib said: "The coming decade is expected to witness a new, major transformation in the development of the Kingdom's mineral resources, specially oil and gas which would help cut down on the country's fuel bill."

Jreisat said that through the technique of remote sensing the NRA has been able to discover Al Risha Gas Field Number Three with the help of an American specialist.

He said the NRA plans to establish a special remote sensing unit to help in the work of oil exploration in the Kingdom.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

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Awad vs. Israeli democracy

ISRAEL's expulsion order against Mr. Mubarak Awad brings up some pertinent questions, which both Israelis and Americans should address, as the Palestinian uprising moves along in its fifth month, and the Palestinian death count reaches close to 200. It is important for the Americans and for Israelis that Israel is a democracy, and this fact is brandished about with much fervour as one reason for the massive and virtually unquestioning support which the United States provides for Israel. For the Israeli government to expel Mr. Awad for his actions in the defence of such democratic principles as wanting to live in freedom in one's own land, and to be rid of an occupation by a foreign country, should raise questions about the true nature of Israel's democracy — though, we suggest, such questions would be the wrong ones to ask.

Israel's democratic or other attributes may make interesting discussion points in state legislatures in the American midwest, or rhetorical points in the speeches of American presidential candidates, but the debate about Israel's behaviour in the occupied Palestinian territories should be conducted on the basis of the facts. To judge a country — or to put up with a country's behaviour — according to one's preconceptions of that country's founding principles, seems to us rather inappropriate.

The facts of the moment are that Israel continues to take measures which aim, in their cumulative totality, to deny the Palestinians their right to live as free people in their own country, or to enjoy the rights that all other people in the world are entitled to. Mr. Awad is one of many symptoms and symbols of the Palestinian uprising; he is not, as the Israelis would like to portray him, a leading cause of the uprising. And he is not, as the Americans might be tempted to think, a litmus test of the struggle in Israel and in Israeli-occupied territories between the democratic basis of Israeli society and the need to resolve political disputes through political means. Mr. Awad gets some extra attention because he carries an American passport, and therefore is supposed to fall under the protection of the American government — the same government that finances the Israeli state which wishes to expel Mr. Awad. Democracy is great stuff; rough occupations which result in thousands of deportations, and hundreds of deaths, and tens of thousands of imprisonments, are bad for the human spirit. The two should not be confused, even when Americans and Israelis are involved.

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Rai: Collective national work

IN his last banquet held in different governorates, King Hussein has displayed his keenness on reminding Jordanians of the need for collective national work. This work is welcomed by all because it constitutes the core of Kingdom's mission and reflects its basic principles. The most important aspect of this basic work is total commitment to the constitution, in form and essence, because this constitution provides for equality for all citizens before the law. Adhering to the constitution is a must, since it forms the pillar for national action. It should be said also that Jordanians should preserve their national unity which is indispensable in any successful national move. Any action which is not in harmony with the concept of national unity could not be considered national or serving the nation. No one has the right to consider himself or his group as a national force, different in status or objectives from other groups in the country. Only through useful and national action can one be rightly considered as belonging to his country and his Arab Nation. But this useful work requires close cooperation among all citizens, and between the public and the state's different institutions. As King Hussein said national action is linked to the people's adherence to and respect of their constitution, and lies in their endeavours to preserve the national unity.

Al Dustour: Uprising grows stronger

AS the Palestinian people's uprising in the occupied territories today completes its fifth month, one can see that it is far stronger and more effective than at any time in the past. The people of Palestine have become more confident of their future; and through their determination, they are more optimistic that their just struggle and their great sacrifices will bear fruit. The uprising over the past months prompted the whole world to recognise the just cause and the legitimate struggle of the oppressed people of Palestine. This uprising gives us hope that the long fight for freedom will eventually bring about a real change in the course of the whole struggle against the occupation forces. It has become clear that no matter how ferocious the enemy is and regardless of oppression and terrorism, the oppressed people can and will continue the struggle and maintain their steadfastness. The one and a half million Arab people under Israeli rule are uniting their forces for the sole objective of liberating themselves and their lands from Israeli rule. This steadfastness on the part of our people in occupied Palestine calls on the Arab countries to extend help and support to their kinsmen. This uprising should be helped to bring nearer the end of the long occupation of the Arab land and freedom for the oppressed people of Palestine.

Sawt Al Shaab: Israeli deception

ISRAELI government leaders have either been split over the new incursion of their forces into Lebanon or are playing different roles with the aim of deceiving world public opinion. Whether the Israeli leaders continue to present a distorted picture to the world about the situation in the occupied Arab territories through their different statements, or continue to defy the international community's will with regard to the Palestine question, they can by no means change the realities in the occupied territories, nor can they help brighten the image of Zionism abroad. Even if the Israelis succeeded in obtaining all the weapons in America's arsenals and despite their alliance with the so-called South Lebanese Army, they cannot stifle the spirit of resistance among the Lebanese who have taught the Israelis unforgettable lessons. The Arab Nation, which is confronted by Iran's aggression from the East and Israel's atrocities in the west, should join its forces and unify its ranks to thwart the ambitions of these enemies and end their aggression.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Deregulation of banking interest rates

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

AN interesting 3-hour seminar was held at the Central Bank of Jordan last Wednesday and attended by top managers and representatives of all commercial banks and finance corporations operating in the country. The seminar was co-sponsored by the Central Bank (CBJ) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and chaired by the deputy governor of the Central Bank, Dr. Maher Shukri.

The subject of debate was "Interest rate liberalisation: The experience of the United States." The deliberations were about a possible change of monetary policy in Jordan in the direction of interest rates deregulation, or floating of interest rates.

USAID furnished a main speaker, Dr. David Willey an advisor to Morgan Stanley International Inc., and a discussant, Mr. Jalil Shoraka, president of the Aries Group, both know very little about the Jordanian economy while the Central Bank furnished three other discussants, Dr. Michel Marto, director general of the Bank of Jordan and an ex-central banker, Mr. Basil Jardaneh, managing director of Jordan Investment and Financial Corporation, also an ex-central banker and Dr. Umayya Tukan, head of the Central Bank's research department.

The presentations were followed by a lively round table discussion which was both frank and impressive.

The trend of discussion was clearly against the status quo. Arguments ranged between calls for full fledged deregulation supervised by the Central Bank and more flexibility towards market forces. Not one of the official speakers defended the present situation or called for preserving the current financial regulations.

Munzer Fahoum, however filled the gap and presented forcefully the case for regulation and the imposed ceiling for interest rates.

Fahoum of course reflects the position of the Arab Bank which is by far the largest and strongest bank in Jordan and undisputed leader in the field.

Fahoum, the assistant director general of the Arab Bank, warned that before deciding on deregulation we should decide on the ensuing scenario of such major step. He provided one:

Interest rates on deposits will go up from seven per cent now to between 14 and 15 per cent. Interest on lending will shoot up from the current nine per cent to between 17 and 18 per cent. Banks with high liquidity will be able to lend money to the best available borrowers at a slightly lower rate but they will have no alternative except to raise their interest payable on deposits in order to protect their share of the market. Smaller and weaker banks will lose money and may become insolvent. The Central Bank will not be able to influence interest rates and bring them back to reasonable levels because the market is very thin and alternative financial instruments are not available.

Fahoum concluded that the present situation was quite comfortable: Banks were making money, depositors were getting a high real interest rate, and borrowers were financed at reasonable rates.

This scenario could be challenged from various stand points:

First, it was ironic that the Arab Bank, from all banks, is taking the position of defending the interests of small banks. The American experience proved that smaller banks did better under deregulation than the giant ones. However the small banks can merge into larger banks if they so wish, and they know better where their interests lie.

Second, there is no evidence whatsoever that the interest rates will double under deregulation as Fahoum had warned. Other

experts believe that they may go up a little bit at the beginning to decline later on, as long as we are starting from a high level of real interest rates.

Third, this analysis assumes a static situation. In real life the market forces will work to adjust and lower or raise the rates through supply and demand factors, when the interest rate or, for that matter, any price becomes too high or too low.

Fourth, it is not true that the thinness of the market tends to weaken the ability of the Central Bank to intervene and influence the market rates. The opposite may be the case. In a thin market the Central Bank can readily influence the rates at a lower cost.

Fifth, if the interest rate on certain high risk loans may rise, the interest rate on other lower risk loans may decline, thus creating a wide variation of rates to reflect the relative risk involved. The present unification of interest rate chargeable to loans makes credit unavailable to projects with high productivity and risk. Perhaps that is why agriculture has to depend on the black market for funds and pay an effective rate well above 20 per cent.

Sixth, the Central Bank is becoming very flexible on its exchange rates policy and that is not compatible with a rigid interest rate policy. Interest rates are supposed to respond to exchange rate expectations to guarantee stability and prevent distortion.

The status quo may be comfortable to the Arab Bank but it is definitely uncomfortable to the banking system and to the national economy as a whole and is causing the misallocation of resources at a large scale.

The most important outcome of the seminar is that the arguments for the cause of rigid regulations were spelled out, perhaps for the first time, and we realised that they were unfounded.

Soviet Kabul correspondent says he expiating guilt of press

By Helen Womack
Reuters

KABUL — Mikhail Leshchinsky, Soviet television's correspondent in Kabul, says he is expiating the guilt of journalists including himself for whitewashing events in Afghanistan before the era of glasnost.

Leshchinsky, one of the most famous faces on Soviet TV, told Reuters in a recent interview in a Kabul hotel that the way Afghan war veterans were often neglected when they returned home appalled him.

"The press is partly to blame for this. For five years, we did not tell the truth, we told fairy tales," said Leshchinsky, who during the first five years of the Afghan war broadcast to the Soviet army at home and abroad from Moscow.

"I also did not tell the truth because I did not know what was going on, I was forbidden to travel to Afghanistan to find out," he said. "But I have been able to pay back some of my guilt in my three years here. It was my duty to Soviet soldiers and their wives and mothers."

In the first years after Moscow sent troops into Afghanistan in 1979, the Soviet media spoke only of young men "fulfilling their international duty" and gave the public no idea of what the conscripts were experiencing in their joint fight with the Afghan army against Muslim rebels.

Bodies came home to be buried under gravesites which made no mention of where and how the person died. Only from the age and date could one deduce that it was probably another Afghan victim. The burials were typical of the way the whole question of Afghanistan was swept under the carpet.

New politics

But with the dawn of Kremlin leader Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost (openness) policy, the Soviet media began extending and deepening its coverage of Afghanistan.

Now newspapers say openly that Moscow made mistakes in Afghanistan and describe the readjustment problems of return-

ing soldiers, many of whom paid with their physical and mental health for the Soviet intervention there.

Leshchinsky, 45, who exudes machismo as he moves around Kabul wearing a khaki suit and reflecting sunglasses, went to Afghanistan in 1985, the year Gorbachev came to power, to replace veteran television correspondent Vladimir Fadeyev.

"I came with new ideas on the problems of Afghanistan and Soviet soldiers here. It was a new face for the new politics," he said.

Not everybody appreciated his showmanship, however.

One Soviet newspaper, in a recent critique of press coverage of Afghanistan, contained a complaint about correspondents who liked to give the impression that bullets were flying around them.

It did not actually name Leshchinsky but he acknowledged it was meant to target him when he said that his colleagues at home sometimes criticised him out of envy.

The weekly Sobesednik quoted a soldier who had returned from Afghanistan as saying: "The commentator would be sitting in an armoured personnel carrier, gasping into the microphone, 'listen to the shooting,' while a worm-out raiding party would have to fire into the air to imitate a battle."

Paratroopers at a base on the edge of Kabul, who publish their own news bulletin three times a week, were critical about Leshchinsky in talks with reporters visiting the base.

Seen everything

But a British television crew, who said they had seen his reports on the lifting of the siege of Khost, praised his professionalism, saying he produced impressive viewing.

Leshchinsky said he and his correspondent wife Ada Petrova made about 200 reports a year for the evening news programme Vremya (time), a quarter of which concentrated on the problems of Soviet soldiers and the rest on political events in Afghanistan.

Although he did not know

Dari, the local language, he said he got around using Russian and English and he and his cameraman went everywhere without bodyguards — even to the bazaar where Soviets are advised not to walk alone.

"I have seen everything — death, blood," he said. "The worst is not the fighting because it's a soldier's job to fight but when you see peaceful people die. Every time a plane with civilians has been shot down, it has affected me badly."

For the ordinary soldiers, Leshchinsky said, Afghanistan was a hard school which produced quick maturity and surprisingly high morale.

"In Moscow, there are all sorts of youth groups like the rockers but they're just hooligans, boys who don't know who they are," he said.

"Here the boys grow up. They learn that in Afghanistan if you're lazy or undisciplined, you're the first to die."

He added that he was afraid not all Soviet soldiers would reach home safely after the troop withdrawal began on May 15, as Muslim rebels were likely to attack them on the road out.

"For eight years, the rebels have been telling us to leave Afghanistan and now they are hampering our departure," he said. "It's still too early to rejoice. Many problems lie ahead."

Asked whether he thought Moscow had been wrong to send troops into Afghanistan, Leshchinsky said it had been a mistake to take a military approach to the country's problems.

For the future, he thought an ideal solution would be the return of the king, Zahir Shah, as a figurehead for an administration run by current Afghan President Najibullah.

"I have regular contacts with Najibullah. He is a literate politician. He has a future," said Leshchinsky.

"The main thing is to avoid a second Iran," Leshchinsky added. Muslim fundamentalism is in nobody's interests. Just as it was wrong to try to impose socialism on Afghanistan, so it would be wrong to impose Islam."

Takeshita still trying to break of Nakasone mold

By Steven K. Paulson
The Associated Press

TOKYO — In the short six months Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita has been in office, he has weathered two political crises, solved at least one major trade issue and visited half a dozen countries.

On the other hand, trade disputes with the United States and Europe linger. Takeshita faces a long wrangle over tax reform and hasn't been able to break out of the mold established by his predecessor, Yasuhiro Nakasone.

Takeshita's critics call his adherence to Nakasone's policies his one big failure. But an admirer like Seizaburo Sato, an adviser to the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, said this is natural because Takeshita was devoted to the policies as Nakasone's finance minister.

"Takeshita occupied many important positions in the cabinet and the party, and he is committed to the policies of Nakasone," Sato said.

But there are signs that Takeshita finally is heading off on his own.

"I think he has not yet found his own way of solving problems, but he is on his way," said Rei Shiratori, professor of political science at Tokai University.

To build up his international reputation, Takeshita, 64, has undertaken an ambitious schedule of trips abroad. His political backers have also issued booklets in five languages, describing Takeshita and his accomplishments.

On the move

Shortly after taking office in October, Takeshita flew to the summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Manila, to Washington and Canada for meeting with U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. In February, he went to South Korea for the inauguration of President Roh Tae-woo. At the end of April, he went to Europe for meetings with the leaders of Italy, Britain and West Germany.

In June, Takeshita plans to visit the United Nations in New

York for the General Assembly meeting on disarmament. Later in the month he will attend the Toronto summit meeting of Western leaders. In July he will visit Australia and New Zealand, and at the end of August he plans to visit China.

The trips help Takeshita build his reputation, Shiratori said, "so he can negotiate from an equal position, and also form his own alliances."

Shiratori said one of the biggest problems still facing Takeshita is "the heavy burden left by former Prime Minister Nakasone, especially with the United States."

Many Japanese feel Nakasone was too closely allied with the United States.

Takeshita, in a policy speech to the Diet, said it is time for a change in Japan-U.S. relations. "The international economic framework so long sustained by the overwhelming economic might of the United States is being transformed, and there is a need for Japan and Western Europe to join forces with the United States in supporting the international economy."

Independence from U.S.

An editorial in the Asahi Shimbun April 23 called on Takeshita to assert Japan's independence from U.S. policies.

"We want the prime minister to be aware that Japan has become an important pillar for the West. It is now time for Japan to assert its own diplomacy, independent of the United States," the independent liberal paper said.

The management styles of Takeshita and Nakasone are vastly different. Nakasone preferred a "top-down" style, bypassing the Japanese bureaucracy by filtering his decisions down through his "brain trusts." That style earned him many international friends, but it carried little weight in Japan, where seeking a consensus is preferred.

Takeshita is known for his "bottom-up" management style, allowing departments wide latitude in determining the best course for Japan to take.

An example is the recent talks between Agriculture Minister Takashi Sato and U.S. trade officials over import quotas for beef and oranges. Takeshita said he had turned the entire matter over to Sato and had no direct role in day-to-day negotiations.

On resolving major policy issues, Takeshita has a slim record. He achieved limited success in resolving a trade dispute with the United States over lack of access to Japan's construction market, primarily because of the major influence of one of his cabinet officials over Japan's construction industry.

However, talks on liberalising Japan's beef and orange imports, broke down and the United States is seeking a resolution through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Takeshita's administration was also unsuccessful in persuading Reagan to lift sanctions imposed last year on some Japanese products over alleged violations of an agreement on American access to Japan's computer chip market.

Takeshita has had very little success in getting government offices moved out of Tokyo, one of the major pledges of his campaign. And he was unable to prevent the U.S. Congress from passing a sweeping trade bill that includes sanctions against Japanese companies. Takeshita is relying heavily on Reagan to veto the bill.

Two domestic crises have plagued his short tenure. One was over a statement by Seisuke Okuno, the national land agency director, who visited a Japanese war memorial and said Japan was not the aggressor in World War II. The other was over his appointment of dietman Koichi Hamada, a former organised crime member, to oversee passage of his budget. Hamada provoked outrage in the Diet when he called a fellow politician a murderer. Takeshita let both crises run their course.

His major test will come later this year, when the Diet considers a tax reform package that Nakasone desperately wanted, but was unable to achieve.

Horoscope may be Reagan's most memorable awkward moment

By W. Dale Nelson
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Americans love to make fun of the occupants of the White House, and President Ronald Reagan and wife Nancy have just given them an excuse.

What the killer rabbit was for Jimmy Carter and the bump on the head was for Gerald Ford, the signs of the zodiac may become for Reagan.

Actually, not much of an excuse is needed to make Americans laugh about presidents.

Lyndon Johnson was subjected to endless jokes just for pulling up his shirt and showing his scar from gall bladder surgery. Abraham Lincoln was a figure of fun because of his habit of telling tall stories. Richard Nixon drew guffaws for dressing up White House guards in uniforms reminiscent of a comic opera.

Once in a while, though, something happens that strikes the public funny bone with special impact.

'Killer rabbit'

For Carter, it all started on a

spring afternoon in 1979 when he told some of his aides, gathered on a balcony of the White House, about his encounter with a swamp rabbit as he fished in a pond on his farm.

Carter said the animal was hissing and gnashing its teeth and seemed intent on climbing into his boat. He said he took action by splashing water at the rabbit with his paddle to shoot it away.

Carter's press secretary, Jody Powell, who was in the group on the balcony, later wrote: "Had I been doing my job, I would have stopped the president at that moment, pointed out the dangers to him and his administration if such story ever got out, and sworn him and all within reach of his voice to secrecy."

Instead, Powell told the story several months later, to a reporter. Brooks Jackson of the Associated Press, who wrote a lighthearted column about it.

"It was a nightmare," said Powell. "The story ran for more than a week. The president was repeatedly asked to explain his

behaviour at town hall meetings, press conferences, and meetings with editors."

Gerald the stumbler

Ford inadvertently broke into comedy one rainy day in Salzburg, Austria, as he walked down the steps of his airplane on arrival for an international meeting with one arm around his wife and the other holding an umbrella.

Two or three steps from the bottom of the ramp, by his count, his heel caught on something. With no arm free to grab a rail, he tumbled onto the tarmac, then jumped to his feet, unhurt.

"From that moment on, every time I stumbled or bumped my head or fell in the snow, reporters zeroed in on that to the exclusion of almost everything else," Ford complained in his White House memoirs.

"Their antics — and I'll admit I laughed at them myself — helped create the public perception of me as a stumbler. And that wasn't funny," said Ford.

Not only that, but television stars such as Johnny Carson and Chevy Chase made Ford's alleged

clumsiness a staple of their sarcastic routines.

Now comes former White House chief of staff Donald T. Regan, reportedly saying in a forthcoming book that Mrs. Reagan used astrology to determine the timing of presidential speeches and travel. The report reminded people that the president also has professed interest in astrology.

Both Carter and Ford had elections coming up when the snickers about the rabbit and the stumbles began. Both lost.

Reagan doesn't have that to worry about. He isn't running. But Vice-President George Bush is running, and he lost no time joining in the fun.

Aboard air force II as he began a three-day presidential campaign swing through the west last week, Bush was asked about Joyce Jills, a Los Angeles astrologer who says the stars told her Bush would be Reagan's best running mate in 1980.

"I'll likely work closely with her," Bush said. "She's brilliant. Joyce Jills? Secretary of what?"

LETTERS

A matter of priority

To the Editor:

Reference to the remarks made by Mr. Marwan Muasher in the Jordan Times "Open Forum" April 18, 1988, I would like to thank Mr. Muasher for his comments and to point out that his objection to the order of priorities of the news bulletin on Saturday, April 16, 1988, is not valid. Had Mr. Muasher been the director of news at Jordan Television, he would have followed the same sequence.

Mr. Muasher says that the news item on the assassination of Mr. Khalil Al Wazir was the sixth item. Please note that the first news item in the bulletin concerned was His Majesty King Hussein's message to the Armed Forces commander-in-chief, containing basic principles of pan-Arab policy.

The second news item was about the call made by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to intervene to halt the deteriorating conditions in the occupied Arab territories.

The third news item reported the death of 11 Arab residents by the gunfire of Israeli occupation forces.

And fourth was the Jordanian government's denunciation of the assassination of Mr. Al Wazir.

We believe that this is the natural and proper sequence of the news. Furthermore, this should not have prompted Mr. Muasher to accuse Jordan Television of overlooking the feelings of Jordanian citizens. Officials in charge of Jordan Television are well experienced in their field of work. Additionally, they have a profound respect for the education and sentiments of Jordanian citizens.

We regret the remarks made by Mr. Muasher, and feel they were hasty, lacking objectivity and fairness.

Mohammad Amin,
Director,
Jordan Television.

سكنا من الاصل

American manufacturer halts sales of tear-gas to Israel

WASHINGTON (AP)—A tear-gas manufacturer said Friday it would no longer sell its product to Israel following complaints from Arab-Americans and human rights activists that the gas has been misused, causing deaths and injuries.

Burl Allison, a vice president of Transtech, Inc., a Sherman Oaks, California, company, said the company's board of directors agreed Thursday with the decision to stop selling to Israel for now.

Transtech, which makes tear-gas at its federal laboratories in Saltburg, Pennsylvania, has been under "tremendous pressure" from Arab-American groups to end the sales, she said. Last month, several hundred people protested the tear-gas sales to Israel at a demonstration outside the laboratories. Thirteen people were arrested for civil disobedience.

Allison did not rule out the possibility that tear-gas sales would resume, but she said that

would happen only if the company can determine the chemical crowd-control agent is being handled properly.

The company wants "some confirmation that their (the Israelis) intent is not to use it as a weapon," she said.

There are no outstanding contracts to ship tear-gas to Israel, and the final shipment was made some time this year, Allison said. She refused to provide a date. Sales to Israel comprised only a fraction of the company's business, she said.

Allison said the company had informed Israeli officials about the decision and "they don't like it." The Israelis told the company they "understand the pressures that have been put on us," she said.

The Israelis have used tear-gas extensively to quell the 21-week-old Palestinian uprising that erupted in the occupied territories. Israel has bought 120,000 tear-gas grenades or projectiles

from U.S. companies under the U.S. government's military sales programme since December.

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, a lobbying group that spearheaded the drive against Transtech, says that 41 people have died from exposure to tear-gas. Others have been injured, they say.

The group praised Transtech for ending sales, saying the action should send a signal to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir that he could "no longer count on corporate America's cooperation in denying the Palestinians their most basic human rights."

Physicians for Human Rights, a Boston-based group, also said it is concerned that the Israelis may not be following proper handling directions for tear-gas, which overcomes victims by causing severe irritation to the eyes, skin and respiratory tract. The group has called for more study into the effects of tear-gas.



A terrified Palestinian woman grabs her child to flee fighting in Beirut's Shatila camp, scene of heavy inter-Palestinian clashes Thursday and Friday.

Murphy urges world arms embargo on Iran

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The United States is pushing for a world-wide arms embargo against Iran because Iran has refused to cooperate in efforts to end the Gulf war, according to the U.S. government's leading Middle East official.

The war must be ended quickly, said Richard Murphy, the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, in his keynote address at a Voice of America symposium on "Gulf Security and the Iran-Iraq War" Friday. Murphy warned that the conflict threatens to spill over against a number of America's friends in the Gulf region. He said the U.S. strategic interest was to see that the Gulf was not dominated by forces hostile to the United States and its friends.

Murphy noted that the United States had "strong political ties to the friendly, moderate Arab states of the Gulf region," but Iran, he added, had followed a

"policy of intimidation, of direct military pressure and terrorism, as well as attempts at internal destabilisation."

Murphy told the symposium that the United States was carrying out a two-track approach towards ending the Gulf war: It is pursuing interim measures, such as providing an increased U.S. navy presence in the Gulf and re-flagging Kuwaiti tankers, and it is moving on the diplomatic front.

Murphy noted that last year the United States led an effort at the United Nations Security Council that brought about Resolution 598, which demands that Iran and Iraq observe an immediate ceasefire, discontinue all military actions, and withdraw all forces to the internationally recognised boundaries. It also calls upon Iran and Iraq to cooperate with the U.N. secretary general in implementing the resolution and in mediation efforts to achieve a settlement.

"Iraq very quickly accepted the resolution," said Murphy, but "Iran has stalled, refusing to give the secretary general an unambiguous response." For that reason, he said, "we believe that enforcement is needed in the form of a global arms embargo on Iran."

Murphy said: "The government of Iran is certainly aware of the strength of our resolve. We have made clear what we are doing in the Gulf and why we are doing it. We have remained steadfast in our policies, steadfast in our efforts to deal effectively with new threats as they flare up. There's no more certain way, in our opinion, to assure Gulf security and protect our interests in that vital region. We can be proud of what we are doing."

Hospital officials said a 25-year-old woman was treated after being hit by four rubber bullets.

Eight Palestinians, including three women, were also treated at Shifa hospital in Gaza City for bruises and lacerations after being beaten by soldiers during protests at the Beach refugee camp and in Gaza, said hospital director Ahmad Yassih.

Also Saturday, several merchants in Nablus, the West Bank's largest city, opened their shops but later obeyed military orders to shut them, witnesses told AP.

A leaflet issued by the underground had urged the merchants to open May 7 in defiance of a military order of Thursday which ordered the businesses closed through Saturday. The military also ordered shop to reopen Sunday and threatened to weld shut any stores that failed to do so.

Amal-Hizbollah battle rages in south Beirut; lull reported in camps

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Tank and mortar fire thundered in the streets as battles between rival Shi'ite militias raged through the southern suburbs of Beirut Saturday.

Pro-Syrian Amal fighters brought artillery and Soviet-made T-54 tanks into action in a dawn offensive against the Iranian-backed Hizbollah (Party of God), security sources said.

Police said 40 people were killed and 24 wounded in the latest battles, raising the death toll in 48 hours of fighting to 56. At least 90 people have been wounded.

The security sources, quoted by Reuters, said Amal regained some posts lost Friday and was reported in full control of Chiyah, Ghobeiri, and Bourj Al Barajneh areas.

Hizbollah seized five T-54 tanks from Amal Friday when it gained the upper hand in the areas of Birr Al Abed, Haret Hreik and Hay Madi, witnesses said. Amal denied the report.

But an Amal official told Reuters his militia would intensify the fighting unless Hizbollah withdrew from all captured positions.

Amal has imported fighters from South Lebanon to join the battles for control of the Lebanese capital's southern suburbs, security sources said.

Calm reported in camps

As the two militias battled, a cautious calm prevailed in two nearby Palestinian refugee camps after heavy clashes between rival factions in which police said 14 fighters were killed and 46 wounded.

Police said it could not be determined whether the calm in the Shatila and Bourj Al Barajneh refugee camps was just a lull in the battle for control of the shantytowns or if the fending Palestinian factions had agreed on a ceasefire.

Friday's fighting was the latest in a series of confrontations in the battered camps between fighters loyal to Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman

Yasser Arafat and the Fateh-Uprising group led by Saeed Musa.

Some Beirut Radio stations suggested that Arafat's loyalists had crushed their rivals in Shatila. But this could not be independently verified.

The Voice of Lebanon radio said Musa's followers "deserted their last stronghold in Shatila and sought refuge with Syrian forces" deployed outside the camp.

The Syrian command in west Beirut declined comment on the report.

Fateh, the main component in the PLO, said in Baghdad Friday that it had asked Syria to intervene to halt the carnage in the camps.

The Amal-Hizbollah battles are also part of a long-running feud between the two militias for dominance of Lebanon's Shi'ite community.

Amal leader Nabih Berri Saturday lashed out at Hizbollah, accusing the group of turning the southern suburbs into a nest of terrorism.

"Let them be sure that we have not been defeated and that defeat is out of the question," he said.

"As if it was not enough for them to transform the southern suburbs into a nest for terrorism through hostage-taking, they want now to turn the suburbs itself into a hostage."

He added: "Until now we have been patient and restrained. Amal gives deadlines but it never surrenders."

Pro-Iranian militants are widely believed to hold the 22 foreigners missing and believed kidnapped in Lebanon in parts of the sprawling suburban maze controlled by Hizbollah.

Hizbollah fought back against the Amal offensive with rocket-propelled grenades, jeep-

mounted recoilless cannons and mortars in hit-and-run assaults, police said.

Militiamen clad in olive-green fatigues held positions behind sandbagged barricades, in narrow alleyways and on the rooftops of concrete buildings.

The battles, the first major fighting in Beirut since Syrian troops deployed in the city last February, erupted Friday after Hizbollah refused to hand over the suspected killers of three Amal men.

Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadallah, the spiritual mentor of Hizbollah, appealed to all gunmen to stop fighting and to open talks to resolve their disputes.

"There is neither victor nor vanquished in the fight between brothers but you are all losers in this war. I call on everybody to lay down their arms and resort to dialogue," said Fadallah, who lives in the suburbs.

The street-to-street battles engulfed all areas of the 41 square kilometres of southern suburbs, a poor and semi-autonomous area which has been beyond government control since 1984 and is a bastion of pro-Iranian Shi'ite zealots.

Witnesses quoted by Reuters said gunmen were looting the houses of residents who had fled to safer areas of west Beirut.

Syrian troops were stationed at all entrances to the suburbs but took no part in the fighting.

Similar Amal-Hizbollah battles erupted last month in South Lebanon, where 38 people were killed and more than 80 wounded.

Amal, Lebanon's largest Muslim militia with an estimated 30,000 men, opposes Hizbollah's aim of setting up an Islamic Lebanese state along Iranian lines.

The battles underscored the deep-rooted underground struggle for control of Lebanon's largest religious community. The 1.2 million Shi'ites are concentrated mainly in the south, in the Bekaa Valley and in southern Beirut.

Poll gives Israeli right-wing strong lead over all others

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli right-wings, bolstered by Jewish anger over the Palestinian uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, would win a decisive victory if elections were held today, according to a public opinion poll published Friday.

The poll, reprinted in the independent daily Maariv, showed right-wing groups would win 66 seats in the 120-member Knesset (parliament) compared to 54 for left-wing groups.

Israel is currently ruled by a coalition left-right cabinet born of inconclusive elections in 1984, and new general elections are scheduled for November.

A decisive right-wing victory would mean hardline Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, or a successor, would head a new government which would exclude leftists and follow hawkish options now espoused by the right.

The current coalition is bogged down over a response to a U.S.

Middle East peace initiative opposed by Shamir but backed by Foreign Minister and Labour leader Shimon Peres.

The Friday poll said Shamir's nationalist Likud bloc would win 39 seats, extreme-right parties would get 17 seats and Jewish religious parties whose policies have slid steadily rightwards would get 10 seats.

Among the extreme right, anti-Arab Rabbi Meir Kahane's Kach movement would get five seats.

"The (rightist) trend has run parallel with the rise of disturbances in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip," said a commentary accompanying the poll.

The Friday poll indicated Peres' Labour Party would now get 38 seats while groups to its left would get 16 seats.

Opinion polls said when the uprising began in December that Labour, backed by a relatively successful economic recovery when Peres was prime minister as

well by his own peace campaigning, would get 46 seats to Likud's 33.

Two of Israel's leading pollsters, Hanoch Smith and Mina Zemach, questioned the results of the new poll, conducted by the Modi'in Ezrahi group, saying it showed a far stronger rightist tendency than their own findings.

"There is definitely a right-wing trend but I do not see it as strong as the poll published today," said Zemach, who estimated the right may have a lead of one or two seats.

Smith told Reuters his most recent findings showed the two sides were about equal "though there is no doubt the 'intifada' (uprising) has had a great effect on Israeli opinion."

Polls on Israeli attitudes to the uprising have regularly shown that an overwhelming majority of Jews, including left-wingers, want the army to crack down harder on Palestinian demonstrators.

Uprising leaders urge escalated protests

(Continued from page 1)

The leaflet said: "The Zionist entity and collaborators and enemies of the nation try to silence the voice of the intifadah (uprising)."

"They do not understand that we draw our strength and determination from our religion. We have patience," the leaflet added.

"We will continue our blessed intifadah with all our strength and determination... forward on the road of dignity and victory, more sacrifices, more attacks on the enemy, the enemy of the nation."

The leaflet was printed Friday and distributed at morning prayers Saturday as instructions for carrying on the rebellion for the last 10 days of Ramadan.

The leaflet also urged special prayers and observance in memory of Palestinians killed in the rebellion, to be held over the next week.

The uprising has claimed the lives of 185 Palestinians since it began Dec. 9, according to U.N. figures.

Israel has heightened pressure to break the rebellion in the last week by detaining Arab journalists and ordering shops throughout the West Bank shut for three days until Sunday.

The latest Israeli move came Friday when the government ordered the 44-year-old Awad deported, alleging that he has played a role in inciting the uprising.

Awad protested the order by announcing Saturday that he had been on hunger strike since he was jailed Thursday night and that he planned to continue the action "until the (expulsion) order is rescinded," said his wife, Nancy Nye.

Nye also told the AP that prison officials took away her husband's mattress and blanket Saturday "as punishment for refusing to eat."

The Jerusalem-born Awad, who also has a home in Wapakoneta, Ohio, has urged civil disobedience against Israeli rule as head of the Jerusalem-based Palestinian Centre for the Study of Non-Violence.

Some of the methods he has advocated such as sit-ins, com-

mercial strikes and boycotting Israeli goods, have been adopted by underground leaders of the uprising.

The United States urged Israel Friday to reconsider the expulsion.

State Department spokesman Charles Redman said that if Israel believed Awad was engaged in illegal activities, he should be formally charged and allowed to defend himself in court.

Awad is "an American citizen who espouses non-violence and reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis" and he "should not be deported without due process," Redman said.

Awad has been dubbed "the Palestinian Gandhi" by supporters. He advocates passive resistance to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

Redman said Washington opposed expulsions by Israel as a

rule because they are "counter-productive and will only lead to resentment."

He said Washington had a special responsibility in this case because Awad is an American citizen. The U.S. protest had been voiced at senior levels in the Israeli government, Redman said.

Three other Palestinians were wounded Friday night when an Israeli army patrol opened fire on a group of stone-throwing demonstrators near the village of Tulkarim in the West Bank, an army spokesman said.

Israel Radio said a petrol bomb was thrown in Bethlehem's Nativ Square Friday night without causing injury or damage.

Also Saturday, soldiers fired rubber bullets at protesters who blocked a main road with boulders in Anabta in the West Bank, said an Arab reporter, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Former hostage readmitted to hospital

(Continued from page 1)

abducted March 22, 1985, a week after Anderson.

The embassy refused to reveal details of the talks, but the spokesman said they were conducted in the presence of French officials. He said the American officials hoped to interview Carton and Kauffmann in the next few days.

Mock executions

Fontaine, interviewed Friday night by the French radio station Europe 1, said his worst moments during captivity came when his kidnappers staged mock executions, holding a pistol to his neck, then firing another weapon to frighten him.

He said they accused him of being a spy for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Israel. "The tribunal has convicted you," he said he was told on one occasion. "You will be executed this evening."

"They put a hood on me and forced me to the wall. One of them put a pistol to my neck and another fired a gun behind me."

Fontaine said he was blindfolded by day and chained during

much of his time in captivity. Conditions improved in the last six months when he was kept in an apartment, his bed was made, the floor vacuumed and he was allowed to watch some television.

Fontaine said Thursday he was held in Beirut with Anderson. Fontaine told reporters as he was driven to hospital soon after arriving from Beirut that he could not stop thinking about "my American friend left behind there."

Mrs. Seurat wants inquiry

The widow of Michel Seurat, who died while a captive of the pro-Iranian group Islamic Jihad in Lebanon, said Friday she wanted an official inquiry into her husband's death.

Mary Seurat said Premier Jacques Chirac should also demand that Seurat's body be returned to France for burial.

"I want his remains so I can bury them, in a country where even dogs can have graveyards," she said.

Seurat and Kauffmann were kidnapped together May 22, 1985. Islamic Jihad, which claimed responsibility,

announced March 5, 1986, that Seurat had been killed.

When Kauffmann returned home Thursday, he said Seurat had become extremely ill late in 1985 and probably died of cancer.

"Who whispered to Jean-Paul Kauffmann that Michel died from cancer. Was it to harm the kidnappers? I demand an inquiry on that point too," Mrs. Seurat said. "I knew he was dead, but no one came to announce it to me," she said. "Mr. Chirac sent no emissaries, and no officials came to present condolences. A dead man doesn't vote. That's probably why Michel doesn't interest them."

The United States said Friday it did not know if France made a deal with Iran to obtain release of the three hostages but asserted the affair demonstrated Tehran's tight hold over kidnappers.

At a briefing, State Department spokesman Charles Redman said the French government had publicly thanked Iran for its assistance in arranging the release of the Frenchmen this week and that Iran took credit.

"Once again, this demonstrates the substantial influence Iran holds over terrorist kidnappers."

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Nazer accuses oil partners of breaching agreed quotas

BAHRAIN (R) — Saudi Oil Minister Hisham Nazer has lashed out against OPEC partners, especially Iran, who voted for a production cut last week, charging them with responsibility for a glut that has driven down oil prices.

"The kingdom does not feel responsible for correcting the mistakes of others by cutting its own production," the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) quoted him as saying in a statement late Friday.

Nazer said five states that voted for an OPEC-wide production cut in Vienna last week to match a proportionate cut in exports offered by independent oil producers were exceeding their OPEC-agreed production quotas.

Singling out Iran as a sixth state that refused to cooperate with OPEC in limiting oil production, he said Tehran had refused to allow OPEC inspectors to monitor its production as agreed by the 13-member Organisation for Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

"Five countries who voted for cuts at the last meeting produce more than their quotas, according to auditors' reports put before the conference," Nazer said.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates had objected to an Algerian proposal to cut OPEC output by 300,000 barrels per day (b/d) in

May and June in response to the non-OPEC state's offer.

Eight other OPEC states had supported the plan, which was backed by non-OPEC exporters Mexico, Egypt, Malaysia, China, Angola and Oman.

Nazer praised non-OPEC efforts to boost sagging oil prices, but said: "The kingdom sees that cooperation with these countries should be based on barrel for barrel cuts because OPEC has reduced its production by more than 35 per cent since 1980 while states outside OPEC produced at full capacity."

The talks ended in disarray after OPEC failed to agree on a counter-proposal from the four Gulf states for a 183,000 b/d barrel-for-barrel cut divided equally between members.

Nazer said oil prices jumped to \$21 per barrel in the first half of 1987 when OPEC members were abiding by their quotas but violations began afterwards despite warning by the kingdom.

The Saudi minister did not name the five states he said were overproducing. He charged non-Arab Iran,

with whom Saudi Arabia broke diplomatic relations on April 26, with lack of cooperation on OPEC checks of its 2.369 million b/d quota.

"There is another country, Iran, whose production or export we do not know and it did not allow auditors to visit its installations and check in accordance with the organisation's decision."

OPEC's average crude output in April was estimated at around 18 million b/d, excluding Iraq, compared with the agreed output ceiling of 15.06 million b/d of the remaining 12 members of the group.

Iraq, which currently produces 2.5 million b/d, is no longer included in the total as it refuses to accept a quota less than that of its Gulf war foe, Iran.

Independent studies have repeatedly shown both Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates to be producing above their quotas.

Nazer defended his country's position and said those who see the group's duties "to meet only to cut production" have a short-term view.

He said the kingdom had cut its production by 56 per cent to 4.3 million b/d from 10 million in 1980.

"The kingdom lost, in its continuous efforts to stabilise the market, more than \$109 billion," he said.

Jordan pursues contacts to boost ties with Japan

By Salameh B. Ne'matt
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Amman Chamber of Industry President Khalid Abu Hassan and board members Saturday called on Japanese ambassador to Jordan Makoto Watanabe to follow up on a Jordanian investment tour of Japan made last month and to lay the groundwork for future contacts between Jordanian and Japanese businessmen.

Abu Hassan was accompanied by board members Abdul Ilah Tabbaa, Wasef Azar and Hassan Al Mifteh, who represented the chamber during the Tokyo visit along with an official delegation led by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

During the meeting, the delegation discussed with the Japanese ambassador the activities and contacts carried out by the Chamber of Industry delegation in Japan and the business meetings held with organisations and institutions dealing with the promotion of economic cooperation.

Abu Hassan told reporters that they also discussed prospects of the establishment of joint venture projects with Japanese businessmen and issues related to the transfer of technology and the setting up of sophisticated vocational training centres in Jordan with Japanese assistance.

Describing the Japan visit, Abu Hassan said that private businessmen who accompanied the official delegation to Tokyo were able to initiate new business contacts with their Japanese counterparts.

He said that during the meeting at the Japanese embassy, Watanabe expressed his country's readiness to facilitate contacts and meetings with managers of giant Japanese companies represented in Amman to enhance possibilities for further cooperation.

The Jordanian side is looking into possibilities for joint venture industrial projects in Jordan in cooperation with the Japanese



Khalid Abu Hassan

private sector which could benefit from Jordan's geographical location to set up Japanese private projects that could serve markets in Arab Peninsula and East Africa.

There is also room for cooperation in joint venture projects that could benefit from facilities extended to Jordan within an existing agreement between Jordan and the European Community states.

During the Japan visit, the Jordanian delegation looked into possibilities for Jordanians to receive vocational training in Japan on several subjects including management and administration as well as modern technical training.

The Chamber of Industry also said that they briefed the Japanese ambassador on prospects for cooperation in the field of tourism and increasing the volume of Japanese tourists to Jordan, through including Japan as part of existing package tours to the Kingdom.

Abu Hassan said the chamber will be presenting a report to Crown Prince Hassan on the chamber delegation's tour of Tokyo within the next two days.

The Jordan Times will be publishing more details on the outcome of the Japan investment tour and a report on a similar tour to the United States scheduled for later this month.

Citibank Amman keeps high profitability, liquidity

By a Jordan Times Staff Writer

AMMAN — Citibank Amman branch earned a pretax profit of JD 787,716 during the financial year which ended Dec. 31, 1987.

The pretax profit at the end of 1986 amounted to JD 802,471.

The branch last year transferred to its New York head office

the sum of JD 207,531 which represents retained earnings from previous years. The 1987 retained earnings amounted to JD 429,215 after various allocations and deductions from the 1987 pretax profit.

The total assets/liabilities of the branch stood at JD 41.0 million last year compared to JD 44.2 million in the previous year. The noticeable declines was in the balance of overdrafts which decreased from JD 8.2 million to JD 5.5 million and the balance in the dinar-denominated savings and time deposits which went down to JD 4.9 million from JD 8.3 million.

Other items on the balance sheet remained relatively stable and high, especially foreign currency savings and time deposits, which maintained the equivalent of JD 20.5 million and cash in hand and at banks which stayed also as high as JD 22.4 million.

Finally, the off-balance sheet items of letters of credit, guarantees and acceptances totalled JD 22.6 million, down from JD 26.4 million at the end of 1986.

IEA sees stronger oil demand

PARIS (R) — The West's International Energy Agency (IEA) is predicting slightly stronger world demand for oil during 1988 than it had forecast earlier in the year.

The IEA monthly oil market report for May shows it has raised its estimate for non-communist world oil demand for 1988 as a whole by 300,000 barrels daily, to 49.5 million, since its last markets report early in April.

In the final three months of the year it believes demand might go to 50.8 million, up 600,000 on earlier forecasts.

IEA officials said the new estimates followed predictions that economic expansion in the 24 industrial nations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) will be around three per cent, up from 2.5 per cent earlier.

The slightly stronger demand provides further support for a widely-held assessment among Western oil industry executives that, despite present surpluses in the market, petroleum prices will probably not drop sharply.

London-based industry experts say the price of crude, around \$16

a barrel now for widely-traded North Sea blends, could slip by \$1 or \$2 in coming months before erasing the losses and perhaps edging a little high by year-end.

The IEA does not detail demand for oil from the OPEC group and from stocks but its figures suggested this will rise from 17.4 million barrels daily in the present quarter to more than 20 million in the final three months of 1988.

It tentatively put OPEC crude oil output in April at 18.2 million barrels per day, up from 17.7 million in March.

Main changes over the month included a rise in output of 200,000 barrels daily by Iraq, to 2.6 million.

Iraq is not party to an OPEC accord on output restraint because the group failed to assign it a quota as big as that of its Gulf war foe, Iran.

The IEA said the OECD nations used 36.9 million barrels of oil a day in the first quarter of 1988.

This would be 600,000 barrels or 1.7 per cent higher than in the same 1987 period and further

evidence of a slow recovery in demand for oil, which was depressed after high OPEC prices in the 1970s tilted the West into recession and began a rush to use energy more efficiently.

The IEA said most of the recent growth in demand was in North America where consumption rose about 900,000 barrels daily or five per cent, to 18.9 million b/d in the first 1987 quarter.

But this was partly due to colder weather in the United States with relatively large year-on-year increases for heating oil and heavy fuel oil.

U.S. petrol consumption, however, has also continued to rise partly due to higher speed limits in a number of states.

Unusually warm weather in Europe brought a year-on-year decline there in first quarter demand of about 400,000 barrels daily, or three per cent, to 12.3 million barrels daily.

In the Pacific region, the IEA estimated consumption rose about two per cent to 5.7 million barrels daily.

U.S. jobless rate declines to 14-year low

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. unemployment rate fell to a 14-year low of 5.4 per cent in April as the pace of the economy quickened, the government said Friday.

Gains in jobs created, overtime hours and workers' earnings pointed to a pick-up in production that could signal higher inflation, financial analysts said.

They said the Federal Reserve (Fed) concerned about inflation and a falling dollar, may tighten credit by pushing up interest rates.

"We may be staring at an economy that is going a little bit too strong," said Donald Ratajczak, director of economic forecasting at Georgia State University in Atlanta.

The unemployment rate for civilians dropped two-tenths of one per cent from March, the third consecutive monthly decrease, the Labour Department said.

The rate was at its lowest level

since June 1974.

Financial markets, which have been battered by recent economic news, reacted warily. The signs of inflation were blamed for lower bond prices.

Wall Street stocks opened higher, but the dollar began at 1.6790 marks and 124.65 yen, below Thursday's close, and continued to drift down.

The drop in the civilian unemployment rate meant that 6.6 million Americans could not find a job last month out of a labour force of 121.3 million.

"Unemployment continues its recent slow, steady fall," Janet Norwood, commissioner of labour statistics, told Congress.

Most analysts expect the economy in the April-June quarter will at least match the 2.3 per cent growth rate of the first quarter.

The evidence of economic growth was good news for Vice President George Bush, campaigning to keep the White House in the hands of Republicans.

In a sign of the continuing export boom, major gains occur-

red in the manufacturing sector where 44,000 new jobs were created and the average work-week stretched to 41.2 hours from 41.

Overtime hours for all workers rose to 4.0 hours a week from 3.7 as stepped-up demand led employers to increase the hours their employees worked.

Including the military, the unemployment rate also dropped to 5.4 per cent.

Average hourly earnings rose 0.5 per cent in April, while average weekly earnings increased 1.4 per cent, mainly due to the longer work-week, the department said.

Those increases signal tightness in the labour market that will mean demands for higher wages in the months ahead, said John Hagens, a vice president of the Wafa Group, a forecasting firm in Pennsylvania.

Abu Dhabi earmarks \$1b for development this year

ABU DHABI (OPECNA) — The emirate of Abu Dhabi earmarked over \$1 billion for development projects this year. Hassan Mousa Al Qamzi, under-secretary at the emirate's Planning Department, said the budget was approved at a recent meeting of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council. The major allocation went to the Public Works Department, which was given \$324 million, town planning and sewage

(\$290 million) and water and electricity (\$172 million). He said the Planning Department had given priority to projects under execution in a bid to rationalise spending following the decrease in oil revenues. Out of the 279 new projects proposed by different departments, only those which were considered urgent had been approved for implementation at a cost of \$572 million.

Weekly Amman Financial Market trading

AMMAN (I.T.) — The following table summarises trading activities at the Amman Financial Market during the week starting Saturday, April 30, '88 and ending Wednesday, May 4, '88. (Figures in Jordanian dinars).

Name of company	Number of shares	Volume of trade	Opening price	Closing price	Par value
Banking and financial institutions					
Industrial Development Bank	400	563	1.400	1.410	1.000
Petra Bank	—	—	—	—	1.000
Jordan Islamic Bank	114	190	1.670	1.670	1.000
Jordan Kuwait Bank	3600	5220	1.450	1.450	1.000
Jordan Gulf Bank	14300	16243	1.130	1.150	1.000
Housing Bank	1000	1710	1.710	1.710	1.000
Arab Jordan Investment Bank	300	630	2.100	2.100	1.000
Cairo Amman Bank	—	—	—	—	5.000
Bank of Jordan	224	3348	14.750	15.100	5.000
Arab Bank	660	75856	114.000	114.500	10.000
Jordan National Bank	4455	11094	2.500	2.470	1.000
Jordan Finance House for Development	—	—	—	—	1.000
Jordan Investment and Finance Corporation	50400	81652	1.870	1.880	1.000
Finance and Credit Corporation	5500	2757	0.500	0.500	1.000
National Financial Investments	300	540	1.800	1.800	1.000
National Portfolio Securities	291	201	0.690	0.700	1.000
Arab Finance Corporation (Jordan)	270	359	1.320	1.330	1.000
Jordan Securities Corporation	2786	2072	0.790	0.740	1.000
Real Estate Financing Corporation	222	3053	20.000	13.750	2.000
Al Mashrek Exchange	350	5075	14.500	14.500	10.000
Insurance and reinsurance					
Jordan French Insurance	—	—	—	—	1.000
REFCO Life Insurance	—	—	—	—	1.000
Jordan Insurance	—	—	—	—	1.000
Arab Life and Accident Insurance	23031	25329	1.100	1.050	1.000
Yarmouk Insurance and Reinsurance	668	715	1.060	1.070	1.000
Holy Land Insurance	—	—	—	—	1.000
Philadelphia Insurance	5950	5267	1.100	0.890	1.000
Arab Union International Insurance	122	110	0.940	0.900	1.000
Jerusalem Insurance	—	—	—	—	1.000
Jordan-Gulf Insurance	—	—	—	—	1.000
Universal Insurance	—	—	—	—	1.000
General Insurance	—	—	—	—	1.000
Jordan Eagle Insurance	—	—	—	—	1.000
Middle East Insurance	—	—	—	—	10.000
Al-Faydhar Insurance	—	—	—	—	10.000
National Abliya Insurance	277	346	1.290	1.250	1.000
Arab Belgian Insurance and Reinsurance	—	—	—	—	1.000
United Insurance	300	300	1.000	1.000	1.000
Services and industries					
General Investments	2017	2531	1.260	1.260	1.000
Imna for Investment and Financial Facilities	738	406	0.550	0.550	1.000
Darco for Housing and Investment	6550	2652	0.400	0.410	1.000
Real Estate Investment (Aqaroo)	—	—	—	—	1.000
Jordan Gulf Real Estate Investment	1050	315	0.300	0.300	1.000
Jordan Leasing Corporation	—	—	—	—	1.000
Petra Enterprises and Leasing Equipments	11000	1510	0.630	0.640	1.000
Equipment Leasing & Maintenance/Tajero	—	—	—	—	1.000
International Contracting & Investment	500	96	0.190	0.200	1.000
Jordanian Electric Power	4486	6480	1.450	1.460	1.000
Irbid District Electricity	—	—	—	—	1.000
Arab International Hotels	—	—	—	—	1.000
Hotels and Tourism	—	—	—	—	1.000
Garage Owners Federation Office	—	—	—	—	1.000
Jordan National Shipping Lines	500	390	0.780	0.780	1.000
Jordan Press Foundation	2360	8260	3.500	3.500	1.000
Jordan Press and Publishing	—	—	—	—	1.000
Dar Al Shaab Press, Printing and Publishing	7700	2851	0.370	0.380	1.000
Jordan Dairy	4500	4400	0.980	0.990	1.000
Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing	5188	10313	1.950	2.000	1.000
Intermediate Petrochemical Industries	69165	85410	1.220	1.270	1.000
Jordan Phosphate Mines	117	259	2.210	2.210	1.000
Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural (Intag)	7673	9904	1.300	1.290	1.000
Arab Chemical Detergent Industries	1203	4697	3.910	3.900	1.000
Jordan Kuwait for Agricultural Products	—	—	—	—	1.000
Aladdin Industries	5470	6489	1.280	1.170	1.000
Arab Aluminium Manufacturing	63672	113580	1.770	1.820	1.000
Jordan Worst Mills	511	2306	4.350	4.570	1.000
Jordan Ceramics	4300	4472	1.010	1.040	1.000
Chemical Industries and Mining (JIMCO)	11320	15734	1.330	1.510	1.000
Jordan Industries and Mining	8194	4916	0.590	0.600	1.000
Dar Al Dawa' for Development and Investment	1129	1603	1.410	1.420	1.000
National Steel Industries	36150	21885	0.760	0.740	1.000
Jordan Spinning & Weaving	16153	37579	2.540	2.630	1.000
Jordan Shipho Chemicals	38717	40524	1.040	1.070	1.000
Jordan Cement Factories	3991	3614	0.900	0.910	1.000
Jordan Glass Industries	—	—	—	—	1.000
Grand total	600,978	875,439			

Fresh clashes erupt in New Caledonia in run-up to elections

NOUMEA, New Caledonia (R) — Fresh fighting broke out in New Caledonia between French military forces and native Melanesian Kanaks demanding independence for the South Pacific island chain, separatists said Saturday.

On the small atoll of Mare, east of the main island, rebels with hunting rifles stood behind road blocks of coconut tree trunks and exchanged fire with soldiers armed with machine-guns, one leader said.

Leopold Joreidie, the number

three of the separatists' main political group, told Reuters of fighting Friday night in the mining town of Canala, north of the capital, Noumea.

There were more reports of fighting with French-paramilitary gendarmes in the forest on nearby Ouvea Island, where French commandos Thursday stormed a cave and freed 23 hostages held for 13 days by Kanak militants.

Nineteen Kanaks and two French soldiers died in the assault, bringing to 28 the number of people killed on the archipelago since separatist unrest broke out two weeks ago. Fifteen separatists were captured during the May 5 cave raid.

The French military denied any fighting had taken place over the last two days. Joreidie said there were no reports of separatist injuries.

Protest marches

Kanak teenagers on Mare, protesting against the Ouvea raid, marched in groups of 10 to local paramilitary outposts, offered themselves for arrest and challenged gendarmes to shoot them.

One youth who identified himself as Bouta told Reuters by telephone: "The French government was willing to negotiate for three years with the ayatollahs to obtain the release of the three Frenchmen held in Lebanon. But with us Kanak people, they were unwilling to wait more than two weeks."

He was referring to the release this week of the last three French hostages held in Lebanon.

In Noumea, riot police blocked 1,000 Kanak demonstrators trying to march to the local French government high commission building.

Eight thousand French troops and police have been on a state of alert since late Friday, following threats of violence in the run-up to Sunday's French presidential election.

Two Kanak tribes in a town 30 kilometres north of Noumea armed themselves with hunting rifles, saying they feared possible violence from pro-French settlers after the election.

Joreidie said his group, the Socialist Kanak National Liberation Front (FLNKS), was afraid of a putsch if conservative Prime Minister Jacques Chirac, backed by most whites here, lost.

Chirac is facing incumbent Socialist President Francois Mitterrand, who favours independence for New Caledonia in association with France.

The FLNKS has called on Kanaks to boycott the poll, saying the local French government cares little for their welfare. But Joreidie said any Kanaks who did vote should back Mitterrand.

Pons ends mission

At New Caledonia's international airport outside Noumea, French Overseas Minister Bernard Pons said Saturday that he was returning to Paris after having accomplished his mission to see the release of the 23 hostages.

The minister, who flew to the island chain at the beginning of the crisis, told reporters that he was saddened by the 19 deaths, but said the assault was a necessary last resort.

"I tried everything, negotiations, dialogue — but that failed to end the crisis."

"If we used force, it was only because the lives of the hostages were at stake," he said, though he added that the territory's problems would never be solved through violence, but through discussion.

Joreidie said efforts by the FLNKS to organise a 24-hour strike by Kanaks throughout the territory Saturday had been largely unsuccessful.



Desmond Tutu

Tutu blasts Reagan, Thatcher and Kohl

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa said only an "academic distinction" would keep U.S. President Ronald Reagan, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl from being called racists.

The black anglican prelate singled out the three leaders Friday because their countries blocked U.N. resolutions against South Africa's apartheid system.

"We don't want to drive the white people into the sea, we don't want to destroy white people," said Tutu. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his non-violent efforts to end apartheid.

"But it is too much to ask that in the land of our birth, we walk tall as human beings made in the image of God? ... to say we want to be free?" Tutu asked.

Tutu addressed a meeting of the U.N. Special Committee against Apartheid on the 25th anniversary of the committee's founding.

He called apartheid "as evil, as immoral as Nazism ever was." Joining him were the Rev. Allan Boesak, also an anti-apartheid leader in South Africa, and almost 20 speakers, who called for renewed dedication to the peaceful abolition of apartheid.

The archbishop said South Africa "is able to cock a snoot (thumb its nose) to the world and say, 'do your damndest,' because the South African government knows that when it comes to the crunch, President Reagan, Mrs. Thatcher and Chancellor Kohl will use their veto to protect the South African government from the consequences of its actions."

"We don't suggest that these worthies are racists," he said in obvious sarcasm, "but it is an academic distinction."

British doctors approve fetus brain-cell transplant

LONDON (Agencies) — The British Medical Association (BMA) has given its approval to brain-cell transplants using tissue from aborted fetuses, but set strict guidelines to guard against abuse.

Two operations last month to transplant cells from the brain of an aborted foetus into that of someone suffering from the nervous condition, Parkinson's disease, caused a storm in Britain with critics denouncing it as immoral.

But the medical profession's ruling body announced in a statement Friday that the operation, hatched in the United States, was acceptable as long as abortions were not carried out deliberately to obtain transplant tissue.

"What is clearly quite repugnant and unacceptable is that anybody should get themselves pregnant in order to provide foetal tissue," BMA Under-Secretary John Dawson told journalists.

"Aborted foetuses would be made available only if the women involved signed declarations permitting their use."

Dawson said the guidelines re-

36 killed in Norway air crash

OSLO (R) — Thirty-six people died when their plane plunged into rocky terrain in central Norway late Friday and burst into flames just minutes before it was due to land.

Olav Soenderland, police chief in the northern Norwegian town of Bodoe from where a rescue operation was launched, told state television that several rescue teams on the scene had confirmed there were no survivors.

"The plane is ablaze and it's been difficult to get close to it. But I can confirm that there were no survivors," he said.

A number of minor explosions after the plane crashed forced the teams, flown in by helicopter, away from the wreck.

The crash was one of the worst in Norwegian history. All those on board — 33 passengers, including one child, and three crew — were Norwegian. Forty people were killed in 1972 when a plane crashed outside Oslo just before Christmas.

The plane in Friday's crash, a four-engine, short-haul de Havilland Canada Dash Seven, lost touch with the airport at Broennoyssund on Norway's west coast just five minutes before it was due to land there.

"It had just disappeared from the airport's radar screen," Broennoyssund police chief Ragnarvald Seim told Reuters by telephone. "It gave no message to the control tower."

The plane, belonging to the Norwegian domestic airline Wideroe, had taken off from the town of Trondheim and stopped at Namsos, before flying on to Broennoyssund, some 100 kilometres to the north.

It had been scheduled to land at 1830 GMT. The weather was not good, with low cloud and light drizzle falling. The wreck was found some 16 kilometres southwest of Broennoyssund.

Small planes are a frequent method of transport in central and north Norway, where the mountainous and inhospitable terrain can make travel by road or rail impossible.

Petter Nissen, director of the Wideroe airline, told state television that the plane had registered a minor technical fault earlier Friday, but that it had been corrected.

"We have no reason to believe that the cause of the crash was any kind of technical fault," he said. "Normally, it's a very safe plane."

Kim Dae-Jung heads largest opposition party in Seoul

SEOUL (R) — Veteran opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung was elected head of South Korea's largest opposition party Saturday and he pledged to cooperate with his political rivals to keep President Roh Tae-Woo's power in check.

Delegates at the national convention of the Party for Peace and Democracy (PPD) unanimously chose Kim as its president, the post he relinquished two months ago under pressure from party moderates seeking a merger with other opposition groups.

Kim's party helped engineer a stunning upset in national assembly polls April 26, winning the largest bloc of opposition seats and ending the ruling party's control of the legislature for the first time in the country's history.

Roh's Democratic Justice Party (DJP) won 125 seats, 25 short of a majority in the 299-seat assembly.

Kim Dae-Jung's party won 71 seats, against 59 for the Reunification Democratic Party (RDP) of his long-time rival Kim Young-Sam and 35 for the conservative splinter group New Republican Democratic Party (NRDP).

"Our party will seek to have close ties with the RDP and NRDP... to launch a joint struggle against any abuse of official power," an ebullient Kim Dae-Jung told more than 1,000 supporters gathered at a convention site in Seoul.

Government shuffles

Roh, meanwhile, named a new interior minister and intelligence chief.

Lee Choon-Koo, 54, former



Kim Dae-Jung

secretary-general of the DJP and a close associate of Roh, replaced Lee Sang-Hee as interior minister, a presidential spokesman said.

Former Justice Minister Bae Myung-In, 56, will take over from An Moo-Hyuk as the powerful head of the Agency for National Security Planning, the government's civilian intelligence arm.

The new appointments occurred five days after Roh carried out a sweeping reshuffle of the DJP to cope more effectively with the opposition-controlled parliament.

Helicopter crashes during Hanover show; two killed

HANOVER (AP) — A British air force helicopter crashed during an international air show, bursting into flames and creating panic among people milling around the exhibits.

Officials said two people aboard the aircraft were killed and at least seven others seriously injured Friday when the copter struck a passenger loading ramp with its rear rotor and crashed.

One end of the helicopter flipped up and wedged against the side of the mangled ramp about five metres above the ground. Officials said there were several explosions after the aircraft crashed and that flames shot more than 7.5 metres in the air.

A British soldier using hand signals to guide the helicopter for landing was among those seriously injured, the royal air force said in a statement issued from British army of the Rhine headquarters in Moenchengladbach.

Officials said one of the soldier's legs was blown off in the explosion.

Records suggest possible Indian use of missing water

NEW DELHI (AP) — India needed heavy water in 1983 when 15 tonnes of the nuclear coolant vanished while being shipped from Norway to West Germany, government records show.

An official with access to the records said Friday he did not know how India coped with the shortage. Another official at the Ministry of Science and Technology flatly denied that the missing Norwegian heavy water came to India.

Both spoke on condition they not be further identified.

The Oslo newspaper Verdens Gang reported April 21 that 15 tons of heavy water was flown on a Liberator-registered West African airlines plane via Basel, Switzerland, to Dubai.

The paper said it then probably went to a nuclear reactor in Bombay.

The records show that five years ago, India needed to import heavy water to augment its own stock so it could commission a 235-megawatt, uranium-fuelled reactor at Kalpakkam, 80 kilometres south of Madras in southern Tamil Nadu state.

The commissioning of the plant was to take place in 1982, but it was delayed for lack of heavy water, the official said.

The plant finally went into op-

eration Jan. 27, 1984, several months after the Norwegian consignment went astray.

The government officials could not say the country from where India obtained heavy water for the Kalpakkam plant.

Heavy water, or deuterium oxide, looks like ordinary water but has an extra neutron and cools a nuclear reactor by moderating the speed of neutrons released in a chain reaction.

It enables the reactor to run on natural uranium instead of enriched uranium fuel and to produce plutonium, which can be used for nuclear weapons.

India's nuclear power programme has been based on natural uranium and heavy water.

The official at the Ministry of Science and Technology said that when India needs extra heavy water, it imports it from the Soviet Union.

Norway refuses to sell heavy water to India because it has not signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

India has refused to sign the agreement because it believes it discriminates against developing countries by preserving nuclear capabilities for a few developed nations.

India has six heavy water plants.

Only half of world's children immunised against polio

WASHINGTON (AP) — The World Health Organisation (WHO) said Friday only half the world's children are immunised against polio and 275,000 children are stricken with the disease in developing countries each year.

Dr. Halfdan Mahler, outgoing director-general of the WHO, called for a campaign to eradicate the disease worldwide by the year 2000. The WHO, the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) and other relief agencies spend \$150 million a year to immunise children against polio and five other major childhood diseases — measles, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus and tuberculosis.

The WHO estimated the agencies would have to increase that budget to \$300 million to achieve the goal of wiping out polio, as smallpox was eradicated a decade ago.

Individual countries are spending \$350 million annually to immunise their children. That effort, too, needs to be stepped up, according to a report from the Geneva-based health organisation.

Polio, which terrorised U.S. families in the 1950s before development of vaccines, is rare in

developed countries. There was one reported case in the United States in 1986, and the WHO said transmission of the polio virus is expected to be eradicated from the American hemisphere by 1990.

The disease attacks the central nervous system in severe cases and causes paralysis; one in 10 people paralysed by the infection dies. In its mild form, polio is characterised by headaches, sore throat and fever.

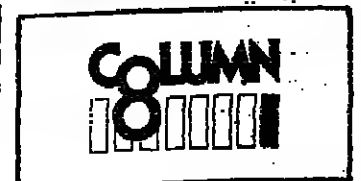
Ten million people in the world are lame because of polio, the WHO said.

It said the countries with the most reported cases of the disease in 1986 were: India 14,600 cases; Afghanistan 1,843 cases; Vietnam 1,600; China 1,537; Bangladesh 810; Brazil 665; the Philippines 533 and Laos 523.

The WHO believes only one in 10 cases worldwide is reported to its Geneva headquarters.

The organisation said it costs \$10 to immunise a child against polio and other major diseases. The costs may be higher, however, to reach children in remote parts of the world, it said.

Infants can be given oral doses of polio vaccine at six, 10 and 14 weeks of age.



Boy held in bathroom for years

HOUSTON (AP) — A seven-year-old boy who was kept virtually a prisoner in a bathroom, possibly for years, was being treated for malnutrition after he escaped through a window, authorities said. The boy's parents were jailed on charges of injury to a child by omission after their arrest Thursday night in what police termed one of the worst instances of child abuse they had seen.

Alexander Lizcano Jimenez, 38, and his wife, Charlene Anne Bishop, 42, appeared Friday before State District Judge Patricia Lykos, who increased the previous bond of \$2,000 to \$10,000 apiece and appointed attorneys for the couple. Banny Jimenez told authorities he escaped Wednesday by climbing through the bathroom window of the family apartment, then wandered to a service station where the attendant fed him a hamburger and fries and called police.

said police juvenile officer A.G. Dewoody. "What you have here is a boy who has been deprived of a childhood," Dewoody said. "No television, no toys, no love."

Dewoody said the boy had shoulder-length hair and a stomach bloated from malnutrition. He estimated he could have been in the bathroom for as long as four years.

Cocaine seizure largest in U.S. history

TAMPA (R) — After three days of sawing, X-raying and weighing U.S. officials said Friday that a cocaine seizure near here Tuesday was the largest in U.S. history. George Campbell, a U.S. Customs Service official, said more than 4,170 kilograms of the drug had been found in hollowed out lumber shipped here on April 19 aboard the British-registered freighter Amazon Sky.

"This is definitely the biggest find ever," said Campbell. He said it had taken until Friday to find and weigh all of the cocaine, estimated by drug enforcement officials to have a street value of more than \$2 billion. The cocaine was found at a warehouse in nearby Tarpon springs Tuesday night by drug agents who were acting on an anonymous tip. Two Colombians and a U.S. citizen were arrested and charged with conspiracy to import and sell cocaine.

Man detained in Sverdlovsk after sexual murders

MOSCOW (R) — Police in the Urals city of Sverdlovsk have detained a man for a series of murders of young women, whose strangled and disfigured corpses have been found in various parts of the city. The Russian Federation daily Sovetskaya Rossiya reported Saturday that the man, named only as F., had been arrested by chance, after an off-duty policeman spotted him in the shadows of a city park, apparently dragging someone behind him. "His first reaction was that it was just a drunk pulling another drunk along, but there seemed to be something suspicious," the daily said, adding that on closer inspection it turned out to be a man trying to conceal a corpse. The newspaper said an investigation revealed that the man had been responsible for a series of unsolved murders of young women and schoolgirls over a period of years, carried out "from sexual motives."

\$175,000 paid for Beethoven manuscript

LONDON (AP) — A private collector paid \$175,000 (\$174,845) Friday for a manuscript of Beethoven's revisions of his Ninth Symphony, his last. "I came here specifically to buy the documents," said the British collector, who refused to give his name. The work, commissioned by the Philharmonic Society of London, was first performed in Vienna in 1824. The three autographed pages of music, which have been recently authenticated, include 27 bars of alterations to the instrumental part of the "Ode to Joy," the choral finale to Symphony no. 9 in D minor. Sotheby's said Beethoven wrote the manuscript "in his usual haphazard style. The alterations are not written down in any order, but are seemingly jotted down at random, moving backwards and forwards from movement to movement, some even added in pencil on top of earlier instructions."

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Gorbachev considers visit to Japan

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has indicated he is willing to visit Japan if it would improve their relations, the Soviet news agency TASS said Friday. Gorbachev told Takako Doi, chairman of the Japanese Socialist Party, that he needed to know what conditions Japan's ruling Liberal Democrats would attach to a visit. TASS said, TASS did not say under what circumstances Gorbachev would visit Tokyo, but several issues have prevented closer ties between the two countries. The Soviet Union has held four small islands claimed by Japan since the end of World War II. Japan has also expressed concern about the Soviet military build-up in the Far East and its support for Vietnam's presence in Kampuchea.

Pope starts visit to Latin America

MONTEVIDEO (R) — Pope John Paul was to start his ninth tour of Latin America Saturday, a continent torn by misery and violence but seen by the pontiff as the cradle of Christian renovation in the 21st century. The Pope, 67, was due to arrive in Montevideo Saturday afternoon and to be welcomed by Uruguayan President Julio Sanguinetti, who is an agnostic. During his 34,420-kilometre tour of Uruguay, Bolivia, Peru and Paraguay, the Pope will review some of the myriad problems facing the world's most Catholic region.

George Rose found dead in car

SANTO DOMINGO (R) — British-born actor George Rose, who starred in a Broadway murder mystery, died after his car ran into a ditch and turned over, and authorities said Friday a small bag of cocaine was found in the vehicle. Armed Forces Minister Lieutenant General Antonio Imbert Barrera said tests were under way to determine if Rose, 68, was under the influence of the drug when he died. His death came two weeks before he was to start a six-month national tour in his biggest hit, "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," for which he won a Tony in 1986 as best musical actor. Police said Rose was driving alone when his rented car ran into a ditch and flipped over near Puerto Plata, where he had a holiday home. The town is 200 kilometres north of the capital, Santo Domingo. Broadway buzzed with rumours that foul play was involved.

Eight deaths blamed on Sikh militants

NEW DELHI (AP) — Nine people, including seven from one village, were fatally shot overnight in the northern state of Punjab, the United News of India (UNI) reported Saturday. Suspected Sikh extremists opened fire at a poor farmers' hamlet late Friday night in Kapurthala district in central Punjab, the news agency said. Seven people were killed and four others wounded in the firing. UNI said. UNI also said that two Hindu shopkeepers were killed in separate overnight attacks in Punjab. The latest deaths brought the toll of those killed by militants in Punjab this year to at least 916.

Ethiopian rebels free Italian captives

ROME (R) — Ethiopian guerrillas have freed two Italian geologists seized last November, the Italian Foreign Ministry said Friday. Italy's foreign aid director in Sudan said Salvatore Barone, 27, and Paolo Bellini, 36, had been handed over to the Sudanese authorities and were expected in Khartoum soon, the ministry said in a statement. The two men, who had been conducting geological surveys for an Italian engineering company northwest of Addis Ababa, were seized by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party November 16 and held near the Sudanese border.

Reagan assails Regan over astrology charge

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Ronald Reagan expressed irritation today about an upcoming book by his former chief of staff that reportedly criticises First Lady Nancy Regan.

Donal T. Regan's book "For the Record: From Wall Street to Washington," is said to reveal that Mrs. Regan used astrology to determine the timing of the president's speeches and travel. It is expected to be in some U.S. bookstores starting Monday.

The president has denied that any of his decisions have been influenced by astrology, in which the position of the sun, moon and stars are studied in the belief that they influence human affairs.

"During a photo session at the start of a cabinet meeting, reporters asked Regan whether he felt betrayed or angered by Regan's book."

"Well, I will say this, that I

would have preferred it if he'd decided to attack me, and apparently from what we hear he's chosen to attack my wife, and I don't look kindly upon that at all," the president replied.

Regan in the past has reacted sharply to criticism of his wife or suggestions that she interferes or has too great a role in administration decision-making.

Regan was frequently at odds with the first lady before being forced out of his job early last year, and Mrs. Regan's opposition was widely believed to have been a factor in his ouster.

Strobe Talbott, Washington bureau chief of Time magazine, which will publish excerpts of the book, said Friday that Regan's book "paints an absolutely devastating picture of the Reagan administration."

"It characterises the kind of inside scene there to be a little bit

like the court of the medics... with a little bit of Lady Macbeth and maybe the Keystone Cops."

In comments on the syndicated discussion show "Inside Washington" scheduled for broadcast Saturday, Talbott said the book portrays an unidentified San Francisco astrologist friend of Mrs. Regan as "a kind of absentee presence almost at the cabinet table or at least right outside the Oval Office, working first through Mrs. Regan."

Regan said he did not expect his former top staff aide and treasury secretary to send him a copy of his book.

"I don't think he's going to send one unless I'm prepared to send a check in return," the president said.

Tom Dawson, a Regan spokesman, said Regan "has had and will have no comments regarding his book until it is published."